

MASSACHUSETTS Saltwater



2013 RECREATIONAL FISHING GUIDE

- ▶ Recreational Saltwater Fishing Regulations
- ▶ Commonly Caught Species

- ▶ Massachusetts Saltwater Fishing Derby
- ▶ Massachusetts Saltwater Fishing Calendar

- ▶ Lobstering and Crabbing
- ▶ Bait & Tackle Shops
- ▶ Charter & Head Boats

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DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

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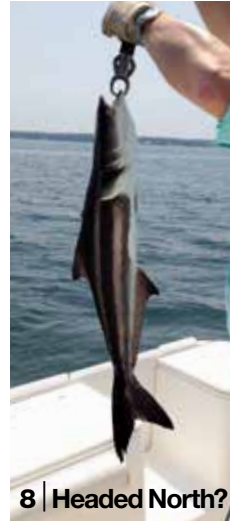
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On the Cover:
Evan Lewis holds a bluefish caught on Eliot Jenkins' boat while taking part in the Sigler Guide Service Ultimate Kids Fishing Camp.



Welcome Letter

Massachusetts welcomes you to some of the finest saltwater recreational fishing in the United States

This Recreational Fishing Guide was developed by the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game's Division of Marine Fisheries (*Marine Fisheries*) to help expand your enjoyment of the Commonwealth's recreational fishing experience. It includes information for marine finfish, lobster and crab, plus an extensive listing of the state's public boat ramps, bait & tackle shops, and charterboat and headboat operations. It also includes information about how to handle your catch and it encourages responsible fishing practices.

Our commitment to achieving sustainable fisheries and a healthy marine ecosystem is supported by dedicating your saltwater fishing permit fees to improve public access to our resources and to build programs that advance management of our fisheries. During 2012, over 150,000 recreational fishing permits were issued, including roughly 900 to for-hire businesses. About 85% were issued to residents of the Commonwealth and a quarter was issued to seniors free of the \$10 permit fee.

The Marine Recreational Fisheries Development Fund, a dedicated fund created for the special purpose of retaining recreational permit fees, peaked this past year at \$1.5 million. Working with the Marine Recreational Fisheries Development Panel, a five-member citizen's advisory board, *Marine Fisheries* spent about one-third of permit fee money that was legislatively appropriated in 2012 to build a sport fishing pier on the Bass River in Yarmouth. The remaining amount was spent to increase distribution of informational and educational materials to the fishing public, improve communication between anglers and the Division, and perform additional monitoring and enhancement of diadromous fish stocks (such as river herring and shad). The 2013 spending plan for roughly \$800,000 will continue to support these programmatic activities, plus the construction of a new sport fishing pier in Oak Bluffs, Martha's Vineyard; expanded sampling of the recreational fishery to improve data used to assess stock conditions and regulate harvest; and completion of two studies on the Commonwealth's flagship recreational species, striped bass.

Supplementing the revenue from your saltwater recreational fishing permit fees, funding for this guide and much of *Marine Fisheries'* Recreational Fisheries Program is provided by one of the most effective "user-pays, user-benefits" programs in the nation – The Sport Fish Restoration Act – where anglers and boaters provide vital financial support for state fisheries management, boating access, and other related programs.

We hope this year's guide will be a useful addition to your tackle box. Please enjoy and respect the richness of our marine resources.

Best Regards,



Paul Diodati *Mary Griffin*

Paul J. Diodati, *Director*

Mary B. Griffin, *Commissioner*

Marine Fisheries
Commonwealth of Massachusetts



Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Governor Deval L. Patrick

Lt. Governor Timothy P. Murray

Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

Secretary Richard K. Sullivan Jr.

Department of Fish and Game
Commissioner Mary B. Griffin

Division of Marine Fisheries
Director Paul J. Diodati

January 2013



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General Information

The **Division of Marine Fisheries** is responsible for the management of the Commonwealth's living marine resources. The Division promotes and develops commercial and recreational fisheries through research, technical assistance, and the collection of statistics. Biologists are assigned to regions of the state and interact with many federal, interstate, state, and local management agencies as well as private fisheries organizations. For further information contact the local Recreational Fisheries Biologists.

Recreational Fisheries Program Biologists

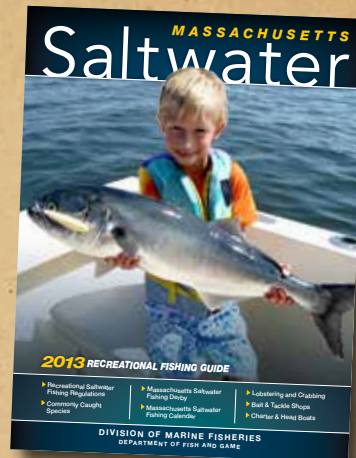
South Shore Office:	<p>Quest Center, 1213 Purchase St. New Bedford, MA 02740 (508) 990-2860 FAX: (508) 990-0449</p> <p><i>Paul Caruso - Cape & Islands</i> <i>John Boardman - S.Shore/S.Coast</i></p>
Annisquam River Marine Fisheries Station:	<p>30 Emerson Avenue Gloucester, MA 01930 (978) 282-0308 FAX: (617) 727-3337</p> <p><i>Matt Ayer - North Shore/Metro Boston</i></p>
Boston Office:	<p>251 Causeway St., Suite 400 Boston, MA 02114 (617) 626-1520 FAX: (617) 626-1509</p>



Office of Law Enforcement

Environmental Police Officers are responsible for enforcing Massachusetts fish and game laws including the commercial and recreational harvest of living marine resources. In addition they also enforce the Commonwealth's boating and recreational vehicle laws and regulations. Fishing violations can be reported to the following number:

Toll-Free Number1-800-632-8075



About this Guide

This high-quality guide is offered to you by the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries through its unique partnership with J.F. Griffin Publishing, LLC.

J.F. Griffin is an award winning publishing house that specializes in producing state fish & wildlife regulation books. J.F. Griffin supports MDMF's staff in the design, layout and editing of the guides. They also manage the marketing and sales of advertising to appropriate businesses within the book.

The revenue generated through ad sales significantly lowers production costs and generates savings. These savings translate into additional funds for other important fisheries and habitat programs.

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THIS SEASON'S CATCH

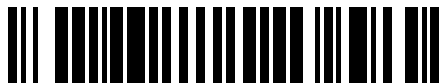


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2013 Saltwater Fishing Permit

Get Your **2013** Saltwater Fishing Permit Today!

Who Needs a Permit?

- All fishermen age 16 or older that wish to engage in the recreational activity of finfishing
- Fishermen age 60 or over need a permit but there is no charge

Exemptions

The following individuals DO NOT need a 2013 permit:

- Fishermen under 16 years of age
- Fishermen who regardless of their age otherwise meet the definition of a disabled person in M.G.L. c. 19C
- Fishermen fishing on permitted for-hire vessels (charter/head boat)

Reciprocity

- All permitted MA residents will be able to fish in the three neighboring coastal states (NH, RI, CT)
- Permitted fishermen from these three neighboring coastal states will also be able to fish in MA waters

Permit Fee

The fee for an individual fisherman (resident or non-resident) is \$10

How will the permit fee money be used?

All money from permit fees will be deposited into a dedicated account and can only be used

for implementing projects that will enhance recreational saltwater fishing including:

- Improvement of public access for recreational saltwater fishermen
- Development and implementation of education materials for the public
- Other marine recreational fishing programs approved by the recreational fishing development panel

To Obtain a 2013 Massachusetts Recreational Saltwater Fishing Permit:

Visit our website at:

www.mass.gov/marinefisheries

Call toll-free from 5am-5pm:

1-866-703-1925

For a list of permit vendor locations and to view frequently asked questions, please visit our website at:

www.mass.gov/marinefisheries

For questions please email:

marine.fish@state.ma.us

or call:

Boston – (617) 626-1520

Gloucester – (978) 282-0308 x150

New Bedford – (508) 990-2860 x150

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REWARD For Bluefin Tuna Tags*



US Tags

A T-shirt and

Orange spaghetti tag:\$50

Green spaghetti tag:\$200

Electronic tag:\$500

All tag returns entered into lottery

1st draw\$1000

2nd & 3rd draws\$500

ICCAT Tags

Yellow spaghetti tag:50€/T-shirt

Electronic tag: 1000€

All tag returns entered into lottery

1st draw 1000€

2nd & 3rd draws500€

Please cut off tags and record:

1. Tag ID number

2. Recovery date

3. Recovery location (lat. & long.)

4. Curved fork length (over the body length)

5. Round weight (when possible)

To claim your reward, return tag and catch data to:

Large Pelagics Research Center

978-283-0368

lpctunalab@gmail.com

For electronic tags call 603-767-2129

OR

NMFS/NOAA

800-437-3936

tagging@noaa.gov

For address and more information visit www.tunalab.org

* Rewards apply only to tags deployed under the 2011-2013 US and ICCAT GBYP programs. U.S. tag ID numbers begin with "BT". Some fish will have 2 tags, one on each side of the second dorsal fin. Please check both sides of the fish for tags. Other research groups have concurrent tagging programs with their own reward systems.



Sustaining Our Fishery Resources

Limit Your Bag vs. Bag Your Limit

- Consider taking only what is needed for consumption in the near term rather than trying to catch the bag limit every trip.
- Do you really need to take 10 bluefish home?
- Better fresh fish for the table tonight than freezer burned fish tossed in the trash in 6 months!

Use Tackle That Minimizes Unintended Harm to Fish

- Use larger hooks or baits to avoid capture of small fish.
- **Do not use** Yo-Yo Rigs (natural bait rigs where the bait is weighted with embedded lead and other hardware and tackle is not attached directly to the line).
- Tie all tackle to the main line to prevent loss. Lost bait rigs will inevitably be consumed by other fish, birds or marine mammals, oftentimes with deadly results.

Use Circle Hooks, Wide Gap Hooks, and Barbless Hooks

- Use circle, wide gap and barbless hooks to greatly reduce the chance of lethal wounding for released fish.
- Use these hooks for bait fishing and for inattentive/inexperienced anglers to reduce post release mortality levels.
- Consider using single hooks in lieu of trebles or doubles – easier on the fish as well as the angler.
- If fishing with artificials, flatten the hook barb with a pair of pliers or file down the barb.

Minimize Fight Time

- Reduce the fight time. The longer the fish fights, the higher the stress level for the fish, which reduces the chances for recovery.
- Studies have shown that a fish that is played long and hard can die from the metabolic changes that take place in its body.
- Those that survive can take several days to return to their normal condition.
- Increased fight time is usually associated with tackle that is too small for the job. By using appropriately sized tackle, fight times can be reduced.

Practice Proper Release Handling

Many unintended fish deaths and injuries can be prevented by following these simple handling rules for fish you intend to release:

- Be attentive and set the hook immediately to prevent the fish from swallowing the hook (setting the hook is not necessary with circle hooks).
- If the hook is swallowed, do not forcefully remove it. Cut the line off as close to the mouth as possible and then release the fish.
- Leave the fish in the water while removing the hook. If you need to remove the fish from the water, wet your hands or use a wet rag in order to preserve the protective mucous layer on the outside of the fish.

- Don't use the gills or eyes as a handhold. On larger fish, remember to support under the belly.
- Return the fish to the water head first. Revive a fatigued fish by supporting it in a swimming position in the water and gently move it back and forth until it can swim off.
- Use knotless landing nets. They're less damaging to the fish and tangle hooks less. Only use gaffs on fish you intend to keep.

No Wanton Waste


- Carefully release all fish that are unwanted, or prohibited by regulation. Even so called "nuisance species" play a valuable role in the marine ecosystem.
- Don't throw them into the dunes, break their backs, etc. It's wasteful and gives the sport a bad name!
- For trophy size fish consider a picture for the wall or a release mount vs. killing a large fish for a skin mount. Bottom line: if you kill it, eat it!

Properly Dispose of Trash and Unwanted Tackle

Marine debris such as synthetic fishing lines, plastic bait bags or containers, and six pack holders can all have undesirable effects on marine life. Fish, birds, marine mammals and sea turtles can swallow and die from ingesting these inedible materials or can become entangled in this debris, leading to wounding, starvation or immediate death. Properly dispose of all trash onshore. Remember—it ends up somewhere!

Don't Damage the Habitat

- Fish Need Habitat! Damage to fish habitat causes damage to fish populations.
- Physical disturbances (for example propeller dredging of mudflats, anchoring in eelgrass meadows, wading into active spawning beds) can cause short or long term damage to fish resources and/or their critical habitats.
- Think before you act – can my activity damage my favorite species habitat or the habitat of the other species upon which it depends? A little care goes a long way in sensitive habitats.
- Remember – you're just one of many people using that habitat time and time again.



Marine Fisheries
strongly recommends
the use of circle hooks for
their proven ability to reduce
mortality of released fish.



Headed North?

Cobia in Buzzards Bay? Indeed you read that correctly! An angler out for striped bass in late June caught a cobia instead and sent photographic proof to *MarineFishes*. Not long after, more accounts and photos of strange catches came in from other anglers. Many were bait fishing for tuna off Jeffries and Stellwagen banks when instead of their typical catches, anglers pulled in small bonito. Even the occasional tropical fish, carried by the Gulf Stream to Cape Cod or into Massachusetts Bay, has been seen. An African pompano was recovered in Beverly Harbor and multiple spotfin butterflyfish have been seen on an artificial tire reef in Yarmouth. Accounts such as these have become more frequent in Massachusetts in recent years.

Seeing cobia in Massachusetts waters is rare. However, some species usually seen south of the Cape have started establishing in northern regions like Boston Harbor and areas in the Gulf of Maine. Boston Harbor, Massachusetts Bay, and Ipswich Bay have always been great places to recreationally fish for striped bass, winter flounder, bluefish, and multiple groundfish species. In recent years, the species list has grown to include newcomers such as black sea bass, tautog, and summer flounder (or fluke). In certain places, many anglers not only encounter these new species, but are actually targeting them! Now it's not uncommon to find a fisherman with four or five different species of legal sized fish on a given day. The fun part is that anglers can multitask while fishing. While "chunking" for striped bass, anglers can also be bottom jigging or bait-fishing near a rock-pile for black sea bass.

Tautog (commonly called 'Tog) now seem to be in great enough numbers north of Cape Cod that both anglers and spear-fishermen have been targeting them from Boston Harbor to Cape Ann, north to the mouth of the Merrimack River. Some fish have also been caught as far north as Great Bay in New Hampshire. Tog are very stout and strong, living on or close to hard structure where they find territorial nooks.

Tautog mainly consume invertebrates and love to eat crabs. The enormous population of the invasive green crab has provided a great food source for tautog that can easily crush the crabs with their powerful jaws. The feeding habits of these fish also mean that they have a deli-

icious and robust flesh that doesn't flake and has excellent flavor.

It's easy to know when you're hooked on a 'Tog. Immediately after realizing they have been hooked, tautog swim hard for the bottom, often breaking off the line on whatever hard structure is around. When hooked up, it is important to quickly gain the upper-hand on these powerful fish by applying steady pressure to get the fish headed towards the surface.

Much like tautog, black sea bass have also become a more prominent resident in northern areas. Black sea bass are related to grouper and likewise tend to congregate near rock-piles and around bridge pilings. Some anglers argue that black sea bass are the best tasting fish native to Massachusetts waters with a flesh that is a little less robust than tautog, but with even more delicious flavor when pan-fried or grilled.

Black sea bass are sexually dimorphic, making it easy for an angler to tell the difference between males and females by looking at the fish. Females are dark grey to black in color while the males are darker with bright blue or purple on the dorsal area near the head. Males also have a raised bump on the top of the head and can have filaments coming off of the top of the caudal fin (tail). Like groupers, black sea bass also change sex as they age. Black sea bass are born and mature as females, changing into males later in life (the cause for the switch, however, is not well understood).

Knowing the differences in flounder species has also become important for anglers in northern waters. The larger and more "toothy" summer flounder have been journeying to areas like the mouth of Plum Island Sound and the Merrimack River for the last 10 years. In the past, northern anglers were not able to keep summer flounder, due to season closures before their arrival to the area. However, the 2012 season was longer and allowed for those fish to be retained by northern anglers. With a subtle bite and good fight due to their larger size, the summer flounder is a challenging fish to catch and definitely requires lots of patience. Don't forget to bring a net for these guys!

While these more southern species are coming into northern waters more and more each summer, they still don't have the same population numbers that exist in their native southern waters. However, these species can still be found, so don't be surprised if you accidentally catch them while targeting the more common northern species. If the trends continue, the numbers of southern species seen in the north will continue to grow. Keep your eyes open for any new species the next time you're on the water, and make sure you know how large the keepers need to be. Get out there and get em'!



Cobia



Bonito



Black Sea Bass (Males)



Tautog

Public Service
Announcement
TEST

From the office of takeemefishing.org.



Do you need a fishing license and boat registration?

Please take a few moments to consider each of the questions below. Take your time. Let it come naturally.



DIRECTIONS

1. Use No. 2 pencil.
2. Do NOT use a No. 1 pencil.
3. We don't know why. Just don't.

1

Is this your idea of fishing with friends?

- A Yes, I am a 1,200-pound brown bear, and these are my friends.
- B Yes, I stand at the edge of the falls and catch fish with my mouth.
- C No.



2

Are you your own boat?

- A Yes, and please stop staring at my stern.
- B No, I'm my own airplane.
- C No.



3

Do you want this in your favorite lake?

- A Yes. Landfills are soooo cliché.
- B Sure, who doesn't love dipping their toes into a pool of swirling sewage?
- C No.



ANSWERS:

CONGRATULATIONS! You definitely need to be licensed and registered. Because funds generated from your fishing license and boat registration go toward conserving our waterways and providing better fishing and boating for generations to come.

Find out how to do your part at:



takeemefishing.org

Marine Fisheries Access Properties

Approximately one-half of all saltwater recreational fishing trips take place from shore.

Unfortunately, this highly popular method of fishing is being threatened by the rapidly accelerating loss of public access to coastal waters. Much of this loss is the direct result of acquisition and development of coastal properties by private parties who then post their holdings against public access. In Massachusetts, colonial law granted private ownership to the intertidal zone (the wet sand), but reserved the

public rights of fishing, fowling and navigation. Although the public rights were reserved for certain uses of the intertidal zone, it is often not possible to enjoy those rights because access across private property to the intertidal zone was never reserved.

To guarantee that the public has access to shore based fishing opportunities, the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries and the

Department's Office of Fishing and Boating Access (FBA) with help from Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration funds, have made it a priority to find, acquire and provide access by way of land acquisition of easements and/or tidal property.

Currently there are ten Marine Fisheries Properties and/or FBA properties or facilities providing anglers with access to shore fishing locations:

Wareham River Fish Pier, Wareham:

From Rt. 6 South in Wareham turn left onto Main St. just after crossing the Wareham River. The pier is located on the river just below Tobey Hospital. There is a parking area on the property.

Craven's Landing at Scortons Creek, Sandwich:

From 6A in East Sandwich turn onto Ploughed Neck Rd. At the end of Ploughed Neck Road, take a right onto North Shore Blvd. Take a right onto Holway Rd. Park only in designated spots. **Note** - parking area is flooded at high tide and 4WD/AWD is highly recommended due to soft sand in the parking area.

Popponesset Beach Shorefishing Area, Mashpee:

From Mashpee Rotary (Rts. 28 & 151) take Great Neck Rd. to Daniel's Island Rd. to Wading Place Rd. Parking Limited at end of Wading Place Rd.

Parker River Fishing Pier, Yarmouth:

Off Main St. (Rt. 28). Parking available at site (managed by the town of Yarmouth).

Bass River Fishing Pier, Yarmouth:

From Main St. turn onto South St. Go approximately 3/4 miles and fishing pier will be at end of parking lot on left (at the mouth of Bass River). Parking available for boat ramp or fishing pier use. Town charges fee during certain time of year (managed by the town of Yarmouth).

Leland Beach, Edgartown:

From Chappaquiddick Island ferry dock, travel on Chappaquiddick Rd. until the road turns sharply to the right. Continue heading straight on Dike Bridge Rd. Park before or after bridge. The area is managed by the Trustees of Reservations therefore an entrance fee is required. If you want to drive your vehicle on the beach you will need an over

Counting Anglers Catch

The Marine Recreational Information Program – Science and You.

You may not know it but as an individual angler your catch does count! For some species, like the ever popular striped bass, recreational catch far exceeds commercial catch. For this and all recreational species, your catch information is a critical component of the fish stock assessment and management processes. These data are gathered at the local and national level through a national survey. Without the survey, and your cooperation, proper management of your favorite species is a near impossible task.

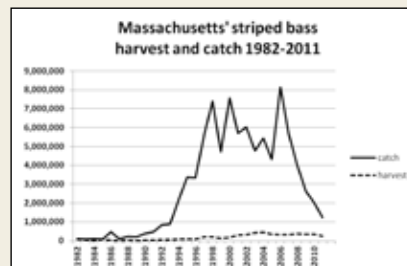
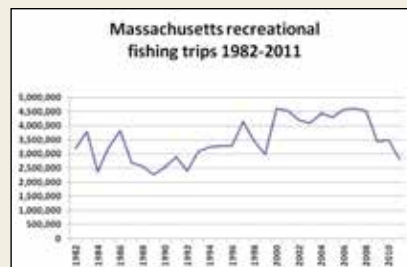
Since 1983 recreational fisheries catch and effort data have been collected along the United States Atlantic Coast through the Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey. This survey has been administered, by the National Marine Fisheries Service with help from states agencies, like the Division of Marine Fisheries here in Massachusetts. Last year the program evolved to MRIP, the Marine Recreational Information Program, to improve the quality of the harvest and catch estimates.

MRIP collects catch and effort data through a two part survey. Part one is a telephone survey to fishing households as identified through the recreational permit holder database. Phone surveyors gather information to estimate the number of an-

gler trips within a state during the two months leading up to the phone call. Information on whether a person fishes from shore or on the water (private/rental or charter or head boat trip) is also gathered.

Part two of the survey is the Access Point Angler Intercept Survey, during which field samplers interview anglers at coastal locations when they're done fishing for the day. Similarly, a sample of boat-based anglers will be intercepted for survey when they arrive back at the dock.

Beginning in 2013, all intercept surveys in Massachusetts will be conducted by the state's *Marine Fisheries* staff. In addition to a short list of demographic questions, surveyors will collect information on catch including species and numbers caught and species and numbers discarded. They will also take a limited number of length and weight measurements of whole fish landed. These catch data will be used with the phone-based effort data to estimate the total numbers of fish caught and released for most locally important, recreationally caught marine species. All the information gathered is confidential and known only to the interviewers and data entry personnel. The information is available to end users, but only in a compiled form where all personal information is removed.



By expanding the Division's participation in the survey, we not only hope to increase the quality of the data but improve our contact with recreational saltwater anglers in Massachusetts. By participating in MRIP surveys you are telling the federal government and the state of Massachusetts how important good fisheries management is to you. In other words, your catch does count!

sand vehicle permit. Call the Trustees Superintendent's Office for details (508) 627-7689

The beach is also accessible via the Wasque Reservation entrance. Follow Chappaquiddick Rd. to the end and then take a left onto Pocha Rd. Pocha Rd. takes you to the entrance to Wasque.

Dogfish Bar, Aquinnah:

From Vineyard Haven, take State Rd. towards Gay Head past Menemsha and Squibnocket Ponds. Take a right onto Lobsterville Rd. and then a left onto Lighthouse Rd. Then take a right onto Oxcart Rd., which parallels the beach. Park alongside the road.

Great Rock Bight Shorefishing Area, Chilmark:

Off North Rd. in Chilmark (managed by the Martha's Vineyard Land Bank).

Fore River Shorefishing Area, Quincy:

From Sea St. take Palmer St. to Yardarm St. to right at Doane St.. Parking at end of Doane St.

Broad Cove Shorefishing Area, Somerset:

On the Taunton River. From Route 138 take North St. east to Pleasant St. North on Pleasant St. to shorefishing area (managed by the town of Somerset). Parking at site.



Photo by Capt. Corey Pietraszek



Photo by Greasy Beaks



Photo by Capt. Scott Edwards



Photo by Little Sister Charters

Have a favorite fishing related photograph?

We are looking for photos to liven up the pages of the Saltwater Recreational Fishing Guide. Whether it is of the family fishing trip or of your monster catch that didn't get away, you can contribute. Please submit all photos to:

Saltwater Fishing Guide
Mass. Division of Marine Fisheries
30 Emerson Avenue,
Gloucester, MA 01930
or
E-mail submissions to
Matt.Ayer@state.ma.us

Sport Fishing Charters



Ready for a day of Sport Fishing?



"Katie Marie" is Plymouth Harbor's largest Sport Fishing Charter Boat. Compare us to the others. We make sure that you have a great day at sea.

We target:

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Your Permit Dollars at Work!



The new fishing pier at Wilbur Park in Yarmouth

When the recreational saltwater fishing permit went into effect, many anglers held their breath assuming the money would disappear, never to be seen again. Well, the legislation that was written for the permit was put into practice and now, two years later, we have a fishing pier to lean our rods on and start building memories of the big one that got away. Not bad!

When the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act was reauthor-

ized in 2006, it required that a method for counting recreational catch be incorporated into fisheries management, leading to the mandate for a registry of all recreational anglers. This meant that the federal government would have to generate a list by either (1) creating a federal recreational saltwater fishing license or (2) if states already had a license/permit in place, gather data from those states.

In Massachusetts, *Marine Fisheries* decided to examine the possibility of creating a state

permit, thereby keeping the generated funds in the state as opposed to sending it to the federal government. *Marine Fisheries* organized a group of individuals directly involved in recreational fishing including bait and tackle shop owners, for-hire captains, and members of recreational fishing groups, to assist in writing the language for legislation that would create the Massachusetts recreational saltwater fishing permit.

After the legislation passed and the Governor signed it into law, a five-member, non-governmental Marine Recreational Fisheries Development Panel was assembled to provide the Director of *Marine Fisheries* with advice on project development and fund allocation. All funds from the Massachusetts recreational saltwater fishing permit are held in a dedicated account. All these funds, by law, must be appropriated for programs that enhance recreational saltwater fishing in the Commonwealth. Moreover, one third of all revenue collected from the permit funds must be spent specifically on improving public access for recreational anglers.

With these funds available, *Marine Fisheries* began working with the Massachusetts Office of Fishing and Boating Access (FBA), which has historically been building and improving pub-



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lic access points across the state. The Bass River boat launch located in Wilbur Park, Yarmouth has been at the top of FBA's list of sites in need of improvement. In addition to improvements to the deteriorated boat ramp and parking lot, *Marine Fisheries* contributed money directly from the recreational saltwater fishing permit dedicated fund to construct a new handicap accessible fishing pier.

On August 29, 2012 *Marine Fisheries* Director Paul Diodati, FBA Director Jack Sheppard, Fish and Game Commissioner Mary Griffin, and members of the Marine Recreational Fisheries Development Panel joined Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs, Richard Sullivan, at a ribbon cutting ceremony to dedicate the new pier and boat ramp at Wilbur Park. At this fishing pier many children will likely catch their first scup, black sea bass, or striper. Those with physical limitations will also be able to fish in safety and comfort. This pier and boat ramp will provide people of all ages and abilities the chance to catch "the big one"!



Above: The ribbon cutting.

Below: Kayakers launch off the new ramp while Environmental Police test the new ramp float.

The next project will be a fishing pier on Martha's Vineyard at Oak Bluffs. Keep your eyes open for future public access projects coming throughout the state with funding directly from your permit fees!



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Recreational Saltwater Fishing Regulations

Regulations listed below are subject to change during the 2013 season.

Species	Note	Min. Size	Open Periods	Possession Limits	
American Eel	(1)	6"	All Year	50 fish	
Black Sea Bass	(2)	14"	Private For-Hire	May 11 – Oct. 31	4 fish
			Closed Season For-Hire (LOA required*)	May 11 – June 14	10 fish
				July 1 – Aug. 11	20 fish
			Sept. 1 – Oct. 10		
Blue Marlin	(6)	Federal rules apply. Consult NOAA Fisheries.			
Bluefish		None	All Year	10 fish	
Cod (North of Cape Cod)	(7)			Closed	
Spring Cod Conservation Zone			April 16 – July 21		
Winter Cod Conservation Zone			Nov. 15 – Jan. 31		
All Other Areas in State Waters	Private and For-Hire	19"	April 16 – Oct. 31	9 fish	
	For-Hire		Nov. 1 – April 15	Closed	
	Private	19"	Nov. 1 – April 15	2 fish/person (75 lb/boat)	
Cod (South & East of Cape Cod)		22"	All Year	10 fish	
Dab (Plaice)		14"	All Year	None	
Fluke		16"	May 22 – Sept. 30	5 fish	
Gray Sole (Witch)		14"	All Year	None	
Haddock	(7)	18"	All Year	None	
Halibut	(7)	41"	All Year	1 fish	
Monkfish		17"	All Year	None	
Pollock		None	All Year	None	
Redfish		9"	All Year	None	
River Herring	(5)	Harvest, possession, sale and use are prohibited.			
Sailfish	(6)	Federal rules apply. Consult NOAA Fisheries.			
Scup	(3)	10"	Private	May 1 – Dec. 31	30 fish
			For-Hire Regular Season	July 1 – Dec. 31	
			For-Hire Bonus	May 1 – June 30	45 fish
Shad	(8)	None	All Year	Closed with exceptions	
Sharks (excludes spiny dogfish)	Refer to shark section.				
Smelt		None	June 16 – March 14	50 fish	
Spiny Dogfish		None	All year	None	
Striped Bass	(4)	28"	All year	2 fish	
Tautog		16"	All year	3 fish	
Tunas	Federal rules apply. Consult NOAA Fisheries.				
Weakfish		16"	All year	1 fish	
White Marlin	(6)	Federal rules apply. Consult NOAA Fisheries.			
White Perch		8"	All year	25 fish	
Windowpane Flounder		12"	All year	None	
Winter Flounder (North of Cape Cod)		12"	All year	8 fish	
Winter Flounder (South & East of Cape Cod)		12"	Apr. 27 – May 26	2 fish	
			Sept. 28 – Oct. 27		
Wolffish	Prohibited				
Yellowtail Flounder		13"	All year	None	

Notes:

- Subject to regulation by the Division and local community. Consult local regulations.
- Black sea bass are measured from the tip of the snout or jaw (mouth closed) to the farthest extremity of the tail, not including the tail filament.
- Maximum 150 scup per private vessel with 6 or more passengers.
- Striped bass must be kept whole, with head, tail and body intact - no mutilation permitted (other than evisceration). The discard of dead, legal size striped bass is prohibited. To

prohibit the practice of high-grading, recreational fishermen may not retain legal-sized striped bass and release said fish in favor of another larger legal-sized striped bass captured subsequently. It shall be unlawful to keep striped bass alive in the water by attaching a line or chain to the fish or placing the fish in a live well or holding car. Striped bass are measured from the tip of the snout or jaw (mouth closed) to the farthest extremity of the tail. Note: Permitted party/charter vessel operators may fillet striped bass for their customers. See 322 CMR 6.07 (4)(g) for details.

- It is unlawful for any person to harvest, possess or sell river herring in the Commonwealth or in the waters under the jurisdiction of the Commonwealth.
- Billfish are measured from the tip of the lower jaw to the tail fork.
- Federal rules apply beyond state waters. Consult NOAA Fisheries.
- Shad is a catch and release fishery, except for on the Merrimack and Connecticut Rivers where anglers may retain up to 3 fish per day.

Prohibitions

Snagging, snatching of anadromous fish: including shad, smelt, white perch, striped bass, trout, and salmon, but excluding alewives or blueback herring.

The taking of striped bass by any means other than hook and line.

To "high-grade" striped bass, i.e. the discard of dead, legal size striped bass.

To retain live striped bass in the water by attaching to a stringer or placing in a live well or holding car.

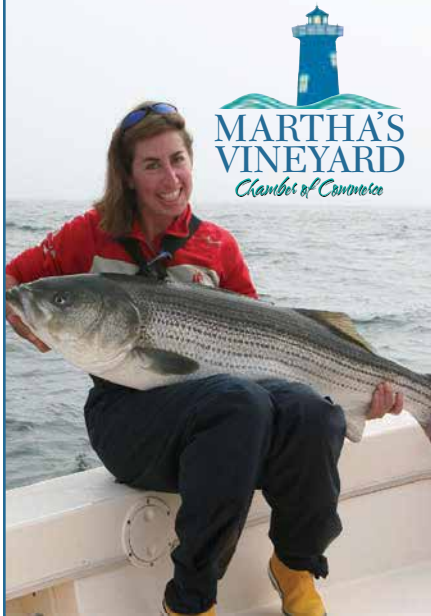
The taking of billfish using gear other than a rod and reel.

The taking of Atlantic salmon, sturgeon, all marine mammals, all sea turtles and the diamond back terrapin from Massachusetts waters.

For anyone, except the owner, to handle, destroy, or molest any lobster or crab pot or other fishing gear, including any gear swept up on the shore, beaches or flats whether public or private, or to take fish there from.

To sell, barter or exchange fish or shellfish without a commercial permit.

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Massachusetts Saltwater Fish Records

Species	Weight	Location	Date	Angler
Albacore	65 lbs	Canyons	8/23/03	Tommy Good
Bigeye Tuna	231 lbs	Oceanographer Canyon	8/28/10	Randy Parda
Black Sea Bass	8 lbs 15 oz	Buzzard's Bay	5/12/07	Aaron Costa
Bluefish	27 lbs 4 oz	Graves Light	9/11/82	Louis Gordon
Bluefin Tuna	1228 lbs	Cape Cod Bay	9/23/84	Marlene Goldstein
Blue Marlin	701 lbs	Fishtails	7/26/92	Walter Morrison
Blue Shark	458 lbs 2 oz	Jefferies Ledge	8/9/11	Ethan Lynch
Bonito	13 lbs 8 oz	New Bedford Dike	9/23/02	Eddie Gomez
Cod	92 lbs	Jeffreys Ledge	7/5/87	Robert Radzik
Coho Salmon	18 lbs 8 oz	North River	1/21/86	James Lewis
Cusk	34 lbs 4 oz	Stellwagen Bank	7/15/90	Gabe Silvestrone
Dolphin	61 lbs 3 oz	Veatch Canyon	8/8/09	Ty Warren
False Albacore	19 lbs 5 oz	Edgartown	9/27/90	Donald MacGillivray
Fluke	21 lbs 8 oz	Nomans Island	9/25/80	Joseph Czapiga
	20 lbs	Stellwagen Bank	1972	Don Rehnstrom
Haddock	20 lbs	Boston Lightship	8/3/74	Joseph Gelsomini
	20 lbs	Stellwagen Bank	1972	Don Rehnstrom
Halibut	321 lbs	Massachusetts Bay	7/21/65	Norman Cournoyer
King Mackerel	8 lbs 6 oz	Lucas Shoals	9/27/08	Tim Broderick
Mackerel	3 lbs 8 oz	Hampton Shoal	10/9/94	Steve Ostrander
Mako Shark	1324 lbs	Massachusetts Bay	7/27/99	Kevin Scola
Pollock	48 lbs 2 oz	Cashes Ledge	9/14/92	Sal Mocerino
Porbeagle	495 lbs	Off Vineyard	7/22/11	Jesse Siegel
Scup	5 lbs 14 oz	Nomans Island	10/17/83	Robert Pimental
Spanish Mackerel	8 lbs	Vineyard Sound	10/8/11	Joe Canha
Striped Bass	73 lbs	Quicks Hole	1913	Charles Church
	73 lbs	Sow and Pigs	1967	Charles Cinto
	73 lbs	Nauset Beach	11/3/81	Anton Stetzko
Swordfish	646 lbs	Nomans Island	1972	Albert Little
Tautog	22 lbs 9 oz	Gay Head	6/29/78	Michael Horsely
Thresher	630 lbs	Off Vineyard	7/23/11	Timothy Delude
Wahoo	131 lbs 5 oz		2006	Kenneth Abbott
Weakfish	18 lbs 12 oz	Buzzards Bay	8/19/84	George Mahoney
White Marlin	131 lbs	Nantucket	7/30/82	Ted Nfatzger
Winter Flounder	8 lbs 2 oz	Georges Bank	7/12/96	Tom Hillebrand
Wolffish	55 lbs	Cape Cod Bay	6/19/00	Andrew Glovsky
Yellowfin Tuna	187 lbs	Nantucket	8/5/90	Mark Boujoukos

How to Measure Your Catch



For Massachusetts marine waters minimum fish sizes are measured as total length. This is the greatest straight line length (not curved over the body) in inches as measured on a fish with its mouth closed from the anterior tip of the jaw or snout to the farthest extremity of the tail. Fish should be firmly grasped with both hands for proper measuring. Care should be taken so that the head of the fish firmly contacts the zero mark on rulers and tapes simultaneously with the tail extremity. On black sea bass the tail filament (tendrill), if present, is not included in the measurement. For fish with forked tails, the upper and lower fork may be squeezed together to measure the tail extremity.

Exceptions:



Tunas are measured using curved fork length. This is in a line, tracing the contour of the body from the tip of the upper jaw to the fork of the tail, which crosses the dorsal insertion of the pectoral fin and the dorsal side of the caudal keel.



Sharks are measured from the tip of the snout to the fork of the tail.



Swordfish, sailfish and marlin are measured from the tip of the lower jaw to the tail fork.



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Massachusetts Saltwater Fishing Derby

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At the end of each derby year, trophies will be awarded to anglers who landed the heaviest fish in each species category. Winners will be chosen in three divisions: men's, women's, and junior's (age fifteen and younger). In addition a "Skillful Skipper" award is presented to any charter/head boat captain who has three derby winning fish caught on their boat per year.

The derby runs from January 1 through November 30 each year and is open to all age groups. Fish entered must be caught in a fair and sporting manner on hook and line and must be measured and weighed at an official weigh station on a certified scale. Weighmasters can be found at most local marinas and tackle shops (see list beginning on page 36 or go to www.mass.gov/marinefisheries). We would also like to remind participants that any entry must be caught in state waters and/or first landed in a Massachusetts port.

To enter, fill out an official affidavit from our website and have it certified at a weigh station. Please write clearly and provide all information requested. Affidavits that are illegible or incomplete cannot be accepted. Mail affidavits to: Massachusetts Saltwater Fishing Derby, Quest Center, 1213 Purchase St. New Bedford, MA 02740. Entries must be received within 30 days of catch and be postmarked no later than December 6th.

Eligible Species	Minimum WT (lbs)
Albacore	30
Bigeye Tuna	100
Black Sea Bass	4
Bluefish	12
Bluefin Tuna	500
Blue Shark	300
Bonito	5
Cod	30
Cusk	20
Dolphin	15
False Albacore	10
Fluke	7
Haddock	8
Halibut	50
King Mackerel	6

Eligible Species	Minimum WT (lbs)
Mackerel	2
Mako	150
Pollock	12
Porbeagle Shark	150
Scup	2
Spanish Mackerel	4
Striped Bass	35
Swordfish	150
Tautog	8
Thresher Shark	200
Wahoo	30
Weakfish	8
Winter Flounder	3
Yellowfin Tuna	50

Special awards are offered for new state records. If your catch exceeds the weight listed on the current list of Massachusetts Saltwater Gamefish Records, you may qualify for a special award. All weigh stations have been

provided with a copy of the current list. When applying for a new state record your affidavit must be accompanied by a clear photograph of your catch with your name, address and telephone number on the back.

Please Immediately Report Sightings of Entangled Marine Animals

Call 1-800-900-3622 (Provincetown Center for Coastal Studies in MA, NH, and RI) or 1-877-775-6622 (NOAA).

Sightings can also be reported to the Coast Guard on Channel 16.



PCCS image. NOAA permit 932-1905



2012 Massachusetts Saltwater Fishing Derby Winners

Species	Category	Angler	Weight
Albacore	Junior	Matt Sheehan	32 lbs 7 oz
Black Sea Bass	Men	David Medeiros	7 lbs 2 oz
	Women	Sarah DeMelo	5 lbs 8 oz
	Junior	Ashton DeMelo	4 lbs 12 oz
Bluefish	Men	Joseph Diodati	14 lbs 11 oz
	Women	Helena Kirschenbaum	13 lbs 11 oz
	Junior	Wyatt Jenkinson	12 lbs 12 oz
Bonito	Men	Ryan King	11 lbs 6 oz
	Women	Helena Kirschenbaum	7 lbs 6 oz
	Junior	Wyatt Jenkinson	7 lbs 15 oz
Cusk	Men	Steve Borgati	20 lbs 10 oz
False Albacore	Men	Gardiner Bridge	14 lbs 2 oz
	Junior	Nicholas Swaylik	10 lbs 2 oz
Fluke	Men	Damon Bullock	11 lbs 12 oz
	Women	Sarah DeMelo	10 lbs 12 oz
Haddock	Men	Mike Romano	13 lbs 11 oz
	Women	Kerri-Ann Brodeur	10 lbs 14 oz
	Junior	Peyton Joiner	10 lbs
Mako Shark	Men	Robert Sylvester	411 lbs

Species	Category	Angler	Weight
Pollock	Men	Michael Wall	22 lbs 8 oz
	Junior	Matt Sheehan	21 lbs 7 oz
Porbeagle Shark	Men	Bill Murphy	447 lbs
Scup	Men	Henry Logan	3 lbs 13 oz
	Women	Martina Mehl	2 lbs 13 oz
	Junior (tie)	Ryan Dailida	3 lbs 12 oz
	Junior (tie)	Matthew Ryan	3 lbs 12 oz
Spanish Mackerel	Men	Robert Neri	6 lbs 11 oz
Striped Bass	Men	Jacques Boisvert	53 lbs 10 oz
	Women	Bonnie Simpson	38 lbs 11 oz
	Junior	Seth Borges	45 lbs 8 oz
Tautog	Men	Mel True	11 lbs 1 oz
	Women	Megan Winton	11 lbs 13 oz
Thresher Shark	Men	Robert Eldredge	446 lbs
Winter Flounder	Men	Brian Garda	5 lbs 4 oz
	Women	Marie Broderick	4 lbs 4 oz
	Junior	Patrick Laskey	4 lbs 4 oz
Yellowfin Tuna	Junior	Matt Sheehan	56 lbs 8 oz

Massachusetts Saltwater Fishing Catch and Release Derby

Additional Rules for Catch and Release Awards

Obtain and complete an official derby affidavit from www.mass.gov/marinefisheries. Fish must be released alive - no use of gaffs or harpoons. Fish must be boated and measured for total length (closed jaw to tip of tail, tail may be squeezed together for measurement) except for false albacore which is measured to the fork of the tail. Lengths should be measured to the nearest 1/2 inch.

A photograph of the fish should be included with the affidavit at the time of submission. Exceptions will be made for digital photos which can be e-mailed in a timely manner to john.boardman@state.ma.us. The photo must show the side profile of the fish and include a clearly discernible measuring device.

Anglers may submit multiple entries but may earn only one citation per species per year. Only one trophy will be given for the largest of each species per year. Catch and release of any four eligible species by an angler within the year will qualify for a "Grand Slam" release award. Only one "Grand Slam" award will be given out per year to the greatest cumulative length. In the event of a tie for any catch and release award, the earliest entry will be used as the tiebreaker.

Eligible Species	Minimum Lengths
Bluefish	35"
Cod	42"
False Albacore	26"
Fluke	24"
Striped Bass	45"
Winter Flounder	19"

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Massachusetts Recreational Saltwater Fishing Calendar

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Atlantic Cod												
Black Sea Bass												
Bluefin Tuna												
Bluefish												
Bonito												
Cusk												
False Albacore												
Haddock												
Mackerel												
Pollock												
Scup												
Smelt												
Striped Bass												
Summer Flounder												
Tautog												
Winter Flounder												

Poor
 Good
 Best

Use this saltwater fishing calendar as a general reference to the availability of the commonly targeted recreational finfish of Massachusetts.



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Commonly Caught Species



Striped Bass

Striped bass is our most sought-after species, providing great sport through catch and release fishing and great eating when you catch a "keeper". Striped bass is one of the largest fish available to the nearshore angler. Fish range from 1 pound to over 60 pounds.

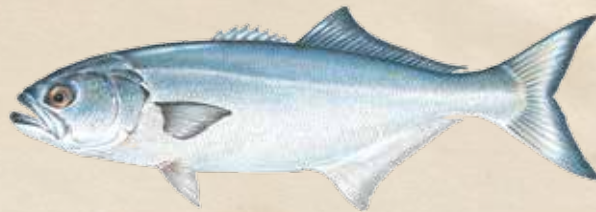
Location: Whole coast surf, inshore bars, reefs, tide-rips, bays and estuaries.

Season: Mid April-October

Baits and Lures: Seaworms, eels, squid, herring; jigs, plugs, spinners, spoons.

Methods and Tackle: Casting from shore, boat-trolling, light to heavy tackle.

Mass. Saltwater Fishing Derby Minimum Weight: 35 lbs



Bluefish

Bluefish are usually ravenous and will strike at just about anything you give them. Watch out for those teeth! They average around 3-7 lbs along the coast and tend to be larger just offshore in the rips. The juveniles, referred to as "snappers," can be found in the estuaries and are fun to catch with light tackle. In all cases, they put up an excellent fight all the way to your boat or shore.

Location: Whole coast surf, inshore bars, tide rips, bays and estuaries.

Season: June-mid October

Baits and Lures: All small bait fish, jigs, spoons, plugs, spinners, flies.

Methods and Tackle: Casting from shore or boat (you may want to use a wire leader) with spin and fly fishing gear, trolling.

Mass. Saltwater Fishing Derby Minimum Weight: 12 lbs



Black Sea Bass

The migratory black sea bass is a tasty fish arriving in our near shore waters in the late spring. These fish also have a peculiar life cycle - the majority begin life as females and then change to males at around three years of age.

Location: South side of Cape Cod, Buzzards Bay to Rhode Island border and a few are found in Cape Cod Bay. Fish for them around bottom structure such as reefs, rocks, and wrecks.

Season: May-September

Baits and Lures: Cut squid, clams, green crabs.

Methods and Tackle: bottom fish from a boat.

Mass. Saltwater Fishing Derby Minimum Weight: 4 lbs



Scup

A party boat staple, scup are easy and fun to catch. Scup are very good eating though be careful of the many bones.

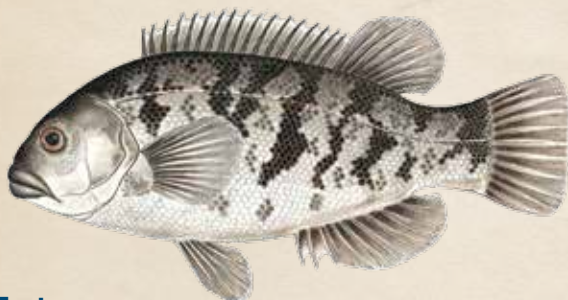
Location: South side of Cape Cod and along coast to Rhode Island

Season: May-October

Baits and Lures: Clams, strips of squid, seaworms.

Methods and Tackle: Light- to medium-weight tackle, drift-fishing, jetties, piers, bridges.

Mass. Saltwater Fishing Derby Minimum Weights: 2 lbs



Tautog

"Tog", "white chin" and "black fish" are all common nicknames for this fish. Tautog are very slow growing compared to most fish and do not migrate far from where they originate but move inshore in the spring and offshore in the winter.

Location: Whole coast, rocky bottoms inshore, bays, harbors, jetties, breakwaters.

Season: April-November

Baits and Lures: Crabs, clams, all shellfish.

Methods and Tackle: Still-fishing from boat or shore, medium action spinning or conventional rod, 20-30 lb test line.

Mass. Saltwater Fishing Derby Minimum Weight: 8 lbs



Weakfish (Squeteague)

The weakfish looks like a large trout and is found in Massachusetts waters during the summer months. Often found feeding alongside striped bass.

Location: Southern Massachusetts sandbars, deep water drop offs, channels, bays and estuaries

Season: Late June-September

Baits and Lures: Shrimp, seaworms, tinker mackerel, eels, strips of squid; artificial lures (bright plastic shrimp, worms, bucktails, tubes, jigs, sand eel imitations)

Methods and Tackle: Still-fishing, drifting, chumming, casting from shore or boat, trolling; light to medium tackle.

Mass. Saltwater Fishing Derby Minimum Weight: 8 lbs



Winter Flounder

The winter flounder (black back) provides good fishing during the cold weather months. They are very accessible and provide the angler with thick fillets to take home.

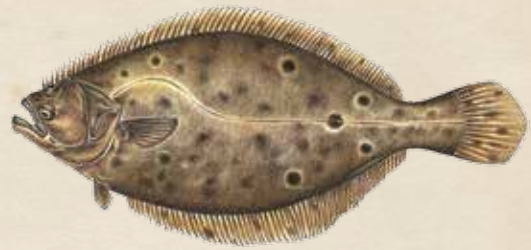
Location: Whole coast, tidal streams, shallow bays, estuaries.

Season: May-February

Baits and Lures: Sandworms, bloodworms, clams, strips of squid.

Methods and Tackle: Chum pot (crushed clams), still-fishing from boats, piers, jetties, bridges, breakwaters; light tackle

Mass. Saltwater Fishing Derby Minimum Weight: 3 lbs



Summer Flounder (Fluke)

Fighting ability and fine flavor highlight this flatfish. The upper surface of the summer flounder head faces left. They also have prominent teeth to assist with their aggressive predatory behavior. Larger fluke are referred to as "doormats". Target sandy or muddy bottom along with fast moving rips that contain debris and bait fish.

Location: South side of Cape Cod, Islands, Cape Cod Bay, Buzzards Bay.

Season: May-September

Baits and Lures: Minnows, squid strips, clams, shrimp; spinners, jigs.

Methods and Tackle: Drift-fishing, troll, chum, still fish, casting.

Mass. Saltwater Fishing Derby Minimum Weight: 7 lbs



Mackerel

Mackerel are fast swimmers and voracious feeders, which offers the angler many options for catching them. They are also an important food fish for many other species of fish and marine mammals.

Location: Whole coast, deep water to shallow bays, beaches, jetties, canal, bridges.

Season: May-September

Baits and Lures: Small bait fish, crab, clams, seaworms, squid strips, jigs, spoons, flies.

Methods and Tackle: Trolling, jigging, casting from shore or boat: light tackle.

Mass. Saltwater Fishing Derby Minimum Weight: 2 lbs



Tunas: Bluefin (top) and Yellowfin (below)

All the tunas are very swift swimmers, provide a thrilling and sometimes backbreaking fight and are literally hot blooded. The giant bluefin tuna is the biggest and most lucrative of the tunas in our waters and thus creates much competition amongst fishermen. Yellowfin are commonly caught in near offshore waters as are albacore.

Location: Offshore east of North Shore, Cape Cod Bay, East of Cape Cod, South of Islands offshore in Canyons

Season: Late June-October

Baits and Lures: Bait fish used with chum slick; plastic squids, multi-squid rigs, daisy chains, jigs, artificial lures

Methods and Tackle: Trolling, chunk baits with chum; medium to heavy tackle

Mass. Saltwater Fishing Derby Minimum Weight: Yellowfin tuna 50 lbs, bluefin tuna 500 lbs



Bonito

Sharpen your reflexes because these small tunas are fast and fun to catch. Watch for feeding schools where there will be jumpers. For a quick identification, look for dark bands running the length of the fish above the lateral line and a silvery belly.

Location: Southern Cape Cod and the Islands, rarely north of Cape Cod.

Season: Late July-October

Baits and Lures: Strip baits, squid, small jigs, spoons, plugs, flies.

Methods and Tackle: Spinning gear, bait casting, light boat rods, trolling, fly fishing.

Mass. Saltwater Fishing Derby Minimum Weight: 5 lbs



False Albacore (Little Tunny)

False albacore are very similar to bonito - fast, fun and sometimes a bit tricky to catch. However, unlike bonito, they make poor table fare.

Location: Mostly warmer waters of the south side of Cape Cod and the Islands.

Season: Late July-October

Baits and Lures: Same as for bonito

Methods and Tackle: Same as for bonito

Mass. Saltwater Fishing Derby Minimum Weight: 10 lbs



Cod

Cod are the deepwater treasures of Massachusetts. They are the number one fish sought after by party boats North of Cape Cod.

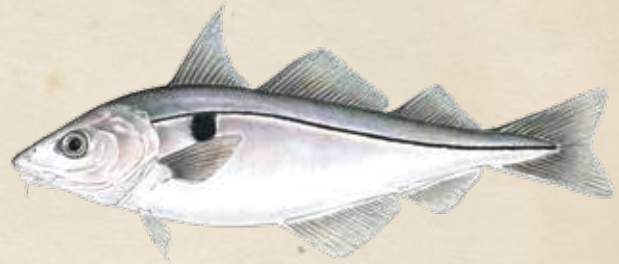
Location: Whole coast, deepwater, inshore while water is cold.

Season: Year round.

Baits and Lures: Sea worms, clams, mackerel, strips of all fish, crabs, jigs.

Methods and Tackle: Bait-fishing from shore and boats, fishing from boats using medium to stiff boat rod, conventional reel and at least 50 lb test line.

Mass. Saltwater Fishing Derby Minimum Weight: 30 lbs



Haddock

Haddock is a member of the cod family and is a delicious fish for the dinner table. The black lateral line distinguishes it from the cod and pollock.

Location: Whole coast, cool waters, prefer depths of 140-450 ft., also prefers shell/sand, smooth rock or gravel bottom.

Season: May-November

Baits and Lures: Seaworms, clams

Methods and Tackle: Still-fishing from a boat, medium action rod

Mass. Saltwater Fishing Derby Minimum Weights: 8 lbs



Pollock

The pollock is more available to the angler than its codfish relative. These aggressive fighters offer the thrills of a bluefish and the flesh of a cod.

Location: Whole coast with more north of Plymouth. Inshore (breakwaters and other structures) and offshore depending on the water temperatures. Inshore, pollock tend to be smaller than those offshore.

Season: May-October with the best runs in May, October

Baits and Lures: Same as cod, plus metal lures with a strip of squid.

Methods and Tackle: Still-fishing, casting, trolling. For deep water use same set up as for cod. Lighter spinning gear can be used for inshore fishing.

Mass. Saltwater Fishing Derby Minimum Weights: 12 lbs



Cusk

Like the cod, the cusk is a cool water fish and is found on hard, rough bottom habitat. Look for the continuous dorsal fin to assist with identification.

Location: Rocky ledges/hard bottom, moderately deep waters (more than 75 feet).

Season: Year round.

Baits and Lures: Same as cod.

Methods and Tackle: Same as cod.

Mass. Saltwater Fishing Derby Minimum Weight: 20 lbs



Halibut

This is the largest of the Atlantic flatfishes, which if you do happen to hook one, can be very challenging to reel up from deep water.

Location: Whole coast, cool and deep waters, preferred bottom type is sand, gravel or clay not soft mud or rock.

Season: Year round

Baits and Lures: Seaworms, clams, strips of fish, sandlance, jigs.

Methods and Tackle: Fishing from a boat with medium to stiff rod.

Mass. Saltwater Fishing Derby Minimum Weight: 50 lbs



Wolffish (Ocean Catfish)

Wolffish are distinguished by their large size, pronounced molar and canine teeth, and the lack of ventral fins. They do not school and prefer hard bottom, not mud, in deep waters.

Location: Whole coast, deep water, incidental to cod fishing.

Possession Prohibited



Smelt

This small anadromous fish is a seasonal favorite along the coast. They're accessible prior to the spawning runs up coastal streams during the late winter and early spring.

Location: Whole coast, estuaries, the mouths of coastal rivers and within coastal rivers.

Season: September-February

Baits and Lures: Blood worms, sand worms, grass shrimp, small local bait fish

Methods and tackle: Ice fishing, shore fishing - keep bait moving slowly up and down within the school; light tackle, hand line.

Mass. Saltwater Fishing Derby Minimum Weights: not an eligible species.



Sharks: Blue (bottom) and Mako (top)

Blue and mako sharks are common to our offshore waters and are sought after by recreational anglers. Makos are the more aggressive of the two fish and will put up an exciting fight. Venture with an experienced shark angler to prevent unexpected surprises and make sure you bleed and ice the shark flesh immediately. Anglers are encouraged to release sharks not intended for consumption.

Location: South of the Islands, East of Cape Cod, off North shore including Cape Cod Bay.

Season: June-October

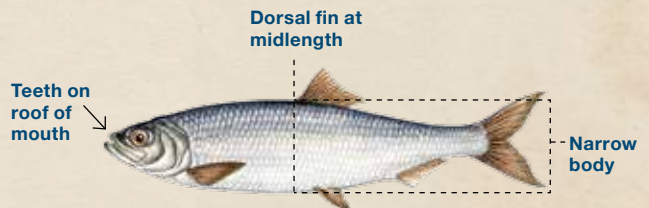
Baits and Lures: Chumming and baited hooks (preferably oily fish)

Methods and Tackle: Trolling, drifting; medium to heavy tackle, wire leader.

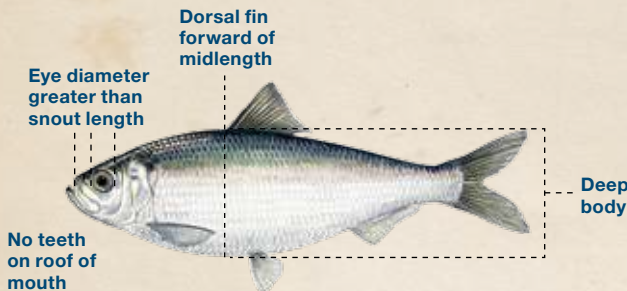
Mass. Saltwater Fishing Derby Minimum Weights: Blue shark 300 lbs; Mako shark 150 lbs

Herring of Massachusetts

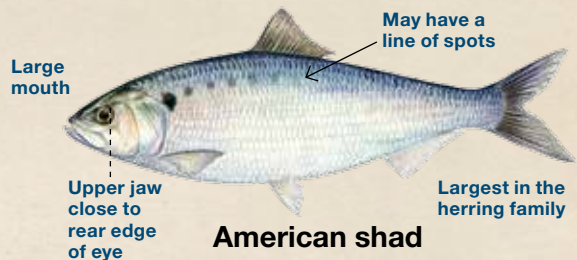
A variety of herring frequent MA coastal and estuarine waters and can be confusing to identify. River herring (alewife and blueback herring) and American shad are generally seen during spring spawning runs. Menhaden and Atlantic herring may appear in our estuaries during coastal migration in the summer or early fall.



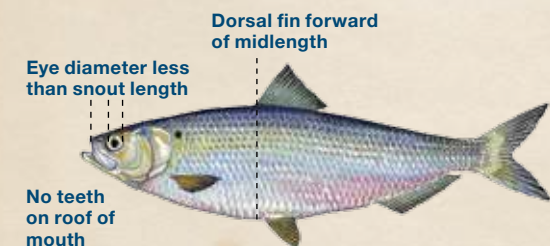
Atlantic herring



Alewife



American shad



Blueback herring



Atlantic menhaden

Note: The harvest and possession of river herring (Alewife and Bluebacks) is prohibited in Massachusetts.

Access Sites

Note:

Use of some ramps requires a fee or a parking sticker that may be purchased in advance. Some town parking facilities are limited to town residents only (RO) and noted where applicable. Fish and Game Office of Fishing and Boating Access (FBA) current or future facilities are italicized. ** indicates shore fishing area. For more information visit the FBA website at: www.state.ma.us/dfwele/PAB/Pab_toc.htm

Location	Jetties	Piers	Ramp	Site Condition	Usable Tide
NORTH SHORE:					
Salisbury					
<i>State Beach</i>	3		*	Paved	All
Amesbury					
Town Landing Merrimac St. (RO)			*	Paved	All
Newbury					
Newbury Town Landing (RO)			*	Paved	All
Newburyport					
<i>Cashman Park</i>			*	Paved	All
Merri-Mar Yacht Basin			*	Paved	All
Ferry Landing			*	Paved	All
<i>Water Street</i>			*	Cartop	½
Rowley					
Perley's Marina			*	Paved	All
Ipswich					
<i>Town Landing, East Street</i>			*	Paved	All
Water Street		1	*	Paved	All
Essex					
Essex Marina, Dodge Street			*	Paved	All
Pike's Marina, Main Street			*	Paved	All
Rockport					
Granite Pier		1	*	Paved	All
Gloucester					
<i>Dunfugin Landing</i>			*	Paved	All
<i>Corliss Landing</i>			*	Paved	½
<i>Lanes Cove</i>			*	Paved	½
<i>Long Wharf</i>			*	Paved	All
Manchester					
Town Hall			*	Paved	All
Beverly					
River Street			*	Paved	All
Water Street			*	Paved	All
Danvers					
<i>Popes Landing</i>			*	Paved	All
Salem					
<i>Kernwood Bridge</i>			*	Paved	All
<i>Winter Island</i>			*	Paved	All
Willows		1			
Marblehead					
Causeway			*	Paved	½
<i>Riverhead Beach</i>			*	Paved	½
Lynn					
DCR Pier/Route 1A		1			

Location	Jetties	Piers	Ramp	Site Condition	Usable Tide
Lynn Municipal Ramp,			*	Paved	All
Blossom St.					
<i>DCR Playground</i>			*	Paved	All
Seaport Landing Marina		1			
Nahant					
Town Wharf			*	Paved	All
Saugus					
Fishermen's Outlet			*	Paved	All
Winthrop					
<i>Shirley Street</i>			*	Paved	All
Boston					
Castle Island	1	1			
Charlestown Navy Yd. at Pier 4		1			
Puopolo Park					
Charles River Res.					
Commercial Street		1			
Dorchester					
Rainbow Park, Commercial St.					
SOUTH SHORE:					
Quincy					
Town River Marine			*	Paved	All
666 Southern Artery					
Bay's Water Marine			*	Paved	½
128 Bayview Avenue					
<i>Sea Avenue</i>			*	Paved	½
<i>Fore River, Doane St.**</i>					
Weymouth					
<i>Back River</i>			*	Paved	All
Hingham					
<i>Iron Horse Station, Route 3A</i>			*	Paved	All
Hull					
"A" St. Marine		1	*	Paved	All
Goulds Boat Shop			*	Paved	All
Pemberton Point		1	*	Paved	All
Priscilla Sails			*	Paved	All
Cohasset					
Parker Avenue			*	Paved	½
Scituate					
Cole Parkway			*	Paved	All
Driftway Recreation Area			*	Gravel	All
North River Marine			*	Paved	All
<i>Scituate Harbor</i>	1	3	*	Paved	All
Marshfield					
Brick Kiln Road (canoe only)			*	Gravel	All

Location	Jetties	Piers	Ramp	Site Condition	Usable Tide
Green Harbor Marina			*	Paved	All
Humarock, Ferry Street (RO)			*	Gravel	All
Humarock Marine			*	Paved	All
Mary's Livery			*	Paved	All
<i>Town Pier, Green Harbor</i>			*	Paved	All
Union Street (canoe only)			*	Gravel	All
Duxbury					
Bay Marine Corp.			*	Paved	All
Mattakeeset Ct.		2	*	Paved	All
Kingston					
Town Landing, River Street			*	Paved	½
Plymouth					
Taylor Avenue (4-WD only)			*	Sand	All
<i>Town Wharf</i>	1	1	*	Paved	All
Wareham					
<i>Fishing Pier, Route 6</i>		2			
East Boulevard, Onset			*	Paved	All
Maco's, Rt. 6-28			*	Paved	All
<i>Oak St., Tempest Knob</i>			*	Paved	All
<i>Route 195 Eastbound rest area</i>			*	Paved	½
Mattapoisett					
<i>Short Wharf, Water Street</i>		2	*	Paved	All
Town Landing,			*	Gravel	½
Matt Neck Road					
Fairhaven					
<i>Pease Park, Middle Street</i>			*	Paved	All
<i>Hoppy's Landing</i>			*	Paved	All
<i>Seaview Avenue,</i>			*	Paved	All
<i>Scotcut Neck</i>					
New Bedford					
<i>East Rodney French</i>					
<i>Boulevard, H Street</i>	2	1	*	Paved	All
<i>West Rodney French</i>					
<i>Boulevard</i>	4		*	Paved	All
Dartmouth					
<i>Padanaram</i>			*	Paved	All
Westport					
Gooseberry Island			*	Paved	½
<i>Rte. 88 Bridge</i>			*	Paved	All
Fall River					
<i>Brownell Street</i>	1		*	Paved	All
Freetown					
<i>Water Street, Assonet</i>			*	Paved	½
Swansea					
<i>Cole River, Ocean Grove Ave.</i>			*	Paved	All
Somerset					
Brayton Point Rd.			*	Paved	½
Broad Cove, Pleasant Street**			*	Car top	½
Somerset Village					
<i>Waterfront Park, Main St.</i>			*	Paved	All

Location	Jetties	Piers	Ramp	Site Condition	Usable Tide
CAPE COD:					
Bourne					
Barlow's Landing			*	Paved	All
Bourne Marina			*	Paved	All
Canal at Electric Avenue (RO)			*	Paved	All
Hen Cove			*	Paved	All
Monument Beach			*	Paved	All
Red Brook Harbor			*	Paved	All
Falmouth					
<i>Childs River, Off Rte. 28</i>			*	Paved	All
<i>Falmouth Inner Harbor</i>	1		*	Paved	All
<i>Great Pond, Harrington St.</i>	1		*	Paved	All
<i>Green Pond,</i>			*	Paved	All
<i>Menauhant Road</i>					
<i>Megansett Harbor,</i>			*	Paved	All
County Road					
<i>Waquoit Bay, Seapit Road</i>			*	Paved	All
West Falmouth Harbor,			*	Paved	All
Old Dock Road					
Wild Harbor, Old Silver Beach			*	Paved	All
Great Harbor, Woods Hole	1	1	*	Paved	All
Sandwich					
Canal Basin			*	Paved	All
Canal-East End	2				
<i>Craven's Landing</i>				Sand	½
Scusset Beach State Park		1			
Mashpee					
Daniels Island Rd.			*	Paved	All
Great Neck Road, Ockway Bay			*	Paved	All
Mashpee Neck Road			*	Paved	All
<i>Poponneset Beach, Wading Place Rd.**</i>					
South Cape Beach	1				
Barnstable					
<i>Barnstable Harbor, Blish Point</i>			*	Paved	All
Barnstable Harbor (RO)			*	Paved	All
Bay Street Osterville (RO)			*	Paved	¾
Bridge Street, Osterville(RO)			*	Sand	½
East Bay Road Osterville (RO)			*	Paved	½
Haywood Rd.(RO)			*	Paved	All
Lewis Bay Road Hyannis			*	Paved	All
Ocean View Ave Cotuit (RO)			*	Sand	All
Old Shore Road,			*	Sand	½
Ropes Beach (RO)					
Prince Cove (RO)			*	Paved	All
Scudder Lane (RO)			*	Sand	½
Iyanough Rd., Hyannisport (RO)	1		*	Sand	½

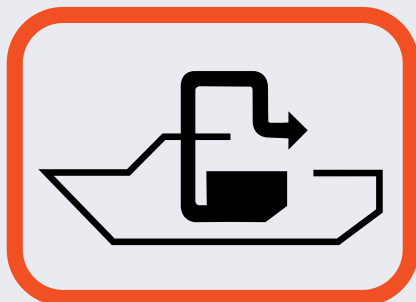
Massachusetts Coastal Waters

Salisbury to Marshfield



Marine Fisheries Map
Courtesy of Micah Dean

The Massachusetts Clean Vessel Act (CVA) Program



The nationally recognized Massachusetts Clean Vessel Act (CVA) Program is administered by the Division of Marine Fisheries with grant funding provided through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Sport Fish Restoration Program. CVA reimburses up to 75% of the total project costs to cities, towns and private marinas for their pumpout facilities.

- Led the nation with free pumpouts for recreational boaters
- More pumpout boats in service than any other state
- Free waterproof pumpout guide at marinas and harbormaster's offices
- Over 4 million gallons pumped!

For more information about the CVA Program, contact:
Tom Beaulieu (617-626-1525; thomas.beaulieu@state.ma.us) or see the Division of Marine Fisheries web site and click on the Clean Vessel Act link.

Location	Jetties	Piers	Ramp	Site Condition	Usable Tide
Yarmouth					
Bay View Street			*	Paved	½
Centre Street, Bass Hole			*	Paved	½
Follins Pond Road			*	Sand	½
<i>High Bank Road**</i>		1	*	Paved	All
<i>New Hampshire Ave.</i>			*	Paved	¾
Pleasant St. Beach			*	Paved	½
Sea Gull Beach			*	Paved	All
<i>Parkers River, Rt. 28</i>		1			
<i>Smugglers Beach, South Street</i>	1	1	*	Paved	All
Dennis					
<i>Cold Storage Rd.</i>	1		*	Paved	All
Follins Pond			*	Paved	All
<i>Horsefoot Cove</i>			*	Paved	All
Sesuit Neck Road			*	Paved	All
<i>Uncle Freeman's Way</i>			*	Paved	All
Harwich					
Allens Harbor	1		*	Paved	All
Herring River			*	Paved	All
Round Cove			*	Paved	All
<i>Saquaket Harbor</i>			*	Paved	All
Chatham					
Barn Hill Rd.			*	Paved	All
Bridge Street			*	Paved	¾
Crows Pond			*	Paved	¾
Mitchell River Bridge					
Oyster River			*	Sand	All
Ryder's Cove			*	Paved	All
Orleans					
Arey's Pond			*	Paved	All
Cove Road			*	Paved	All
Goose Hummock Shop			*	Paved	All
Herring Brook Way			*	Paved	All
Meeting House Pond,			*	Paved	All
River Road (RO)					
Mill Pond			*	Paved	All
Paw Wah Pond			*	Paved	All
Quanset Road			*	Paved	All
Rock Harbor	1		*	Paved	All
Eastham					
<i>Rock Harbor</i>	1		*	Paved	½
Hemenway Road			*	Paved	½
Rt. 6 Town Cove			*	Paved	½
Wellfleet					
<i>Town Pier</i>	1		*	Paved	All
Truro					
<i>Pamet Harbor</i>			*	Paved	All

Location	Jetties	Piers	Ramp	Site Condition	Usable Tide
Provincetown					
West End Parking Lot,			*	Paved	½
Commercial Street					
MARTHA'S VINEYARD:					
Chilmark					
<i>Great Rock Bight, North Road**</i>					
Nashaquitsa Pond, South Road			*	Paved	All
Menemsha	1	1			
Edgartown					
<i>East Beach, Cape Poge **</i>	1		*	Cartop	All
State Road	1				
Memorial Wharf		1			
Edgartown Great Pond,			*	Sand	All
Wilson Landing					
<i>Katama Bay, Edgartown Bay Road</i>			*	Paved	¾
Eel Pond,			*	Paved	All
Pease's Point Way					
Aquinnah					
Menemsha Creek,	1		*	Paved	All
Lobsterville Beach					
<i>Dogfish Bar**</i>					
Oak Bluffs					
<i>State Road</i>	3		*	Paved	All
Beach Road	1				
Harbor, East Chop Drive			*	Paved	All
<i>Pecoy Point, Pulpit Rock Road</i>			*	Cartop	All
Tisbury					
<i>Lagoon Pond, Beach Road</i>			*	Paved	All
<i>Tashmoo Pond, Lake Avenue</i>	1		*	Paved	All
NANTUCKET:					
<i>Jackson Point</i>			*	Paved	All
<i>Madaket Harbor, H Street</i>			*	Paved	All
Nantucket Harbor			*	Paved	All

Do you want to know where to go fishing or boating?

Public Access to the Waters of Massachusetts is now available. This 146 page map booklet will show and tell you information about current public sites. Send \$8.00, payable by check to:



Office of Fishing & Boating Access
 Department of Fish and Game
 1440 Soldiers Field Road
 Brighton, MA 02135

For more information call: (617) 727-1843

Massachusetts Coastal Waters

Marshfield to Seekonk

MarineFisheries Map Courtesy of Micah Dean



Visit our Home Page at
www.mass.gov/marinefisheries



The Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries website has:

- Commercial and recreational regulations
- Salt Water Fishing Derby standings
- Permit applications
- *MarineFisheries* publications and much more!

To get up to date rule changes and notices you can also join the *MarineFisheries* listserv. This is a notification list only, where you will receive timely information from the Division regarding fishery openings and closings, regulation changes and public hearing notices. We hope to use this listserv to keep our constituents more informed and reduce our reliance on paper mail. Please encourage other interested parties to join this list.

To join the list,
send e-mail with nothing in the subject or body to:
join-marinefisheries@listserv.state.ma.us

To be removed,
send e-mail to:
leave-marinefisheries@listserv.state.ma.us

Recreational Lobster/Crabbing Permit

Who can get one?

U.S. Citizens and residents of Massachusetts

Parental consent is needed if the child is under 17 years old.

U.S. Citizens and non-residents of Massachusetts who:

1. Temporarily reside in any coastal city or town of Massachusetts and...
2. Own more than \$5,000 in real estate within Massachusetts as determined by tax records.

Non-U.S. Citizens who are not residents of Massachusetts shall:

1. Provide a copy of the alien registration receipt card issued by the U.S. Dept. of Justice, Immigration and Naturalization Service to the applicant and...
2. Temporarily reside in any coastal city or town of Massachusetts and...

3. Own more than \$5,000 in real estate within Massachusetts as determined by tax records.

Non-U.S. Citizens who are residents of Massachusetts shall:

Provide a copy of applicant's alien registration receipt card issued by the U.S. Dept. of Justice, Immigration and Naturalization Service.

What does it cost?

\$40 for residents of Massachusetts.
\$60 for all non-residents.

Can I sell my lobsters?

No. A Recreational Lobster/Crabbing Permit **DOES NOT** allow you to sell your catch. You must obtain a Commercial Lobster/Crabbing Permit if you wish to sell your catch.

Where can I get a permit?

You can purchase a Recreational Lobster/Crabbing Permit at any MA Division of Marine Fisheries business office.

If you are a Massachusetts resident you may purchase/renew your Recreational Lobster/Crabbing Permit online* *(certain restrictions apply)

Please log onto: www.mass.gov/marinefisheries and follow the step by step instructions for purchasing a Recreational Lobster/Crabbing Permit.

How many lobsters and crabs can I take?

There is a limit of **15 lobsters** per day per permit, and all lobsters must meet the legal requirements. There is a limit of **25 blue crabs** per day and a limit of **50 crabs** per day total for all edible crab species combined.

Who can use the permit?

A Recreational Lobster/Crabbing Permit authorizes the holder and members of the holder's **immediate family**, residing in the same residence, to fish for and take lobsters and edible crabs using up to 10 pots. The immediate family is defined as the **spouse, parents, children, grandparents, brothers and sisters** of the holder.

This permit may be endorsed for diving for the permit holder only. Other family members may purchase additional permits for diving.

Only **ONE** Recreational Lobster/Crabbing permit endorsed for 10 pots is allowed per family/household.

Can I dive and use pots with this permit?

When you purchase your Recreational Lobster/Crabbing Permit you must specify if you want it endorsed for the use of 10 pots or for diving. Your permit can be endorsed for both practices if you prefer.

Where can traps be set?

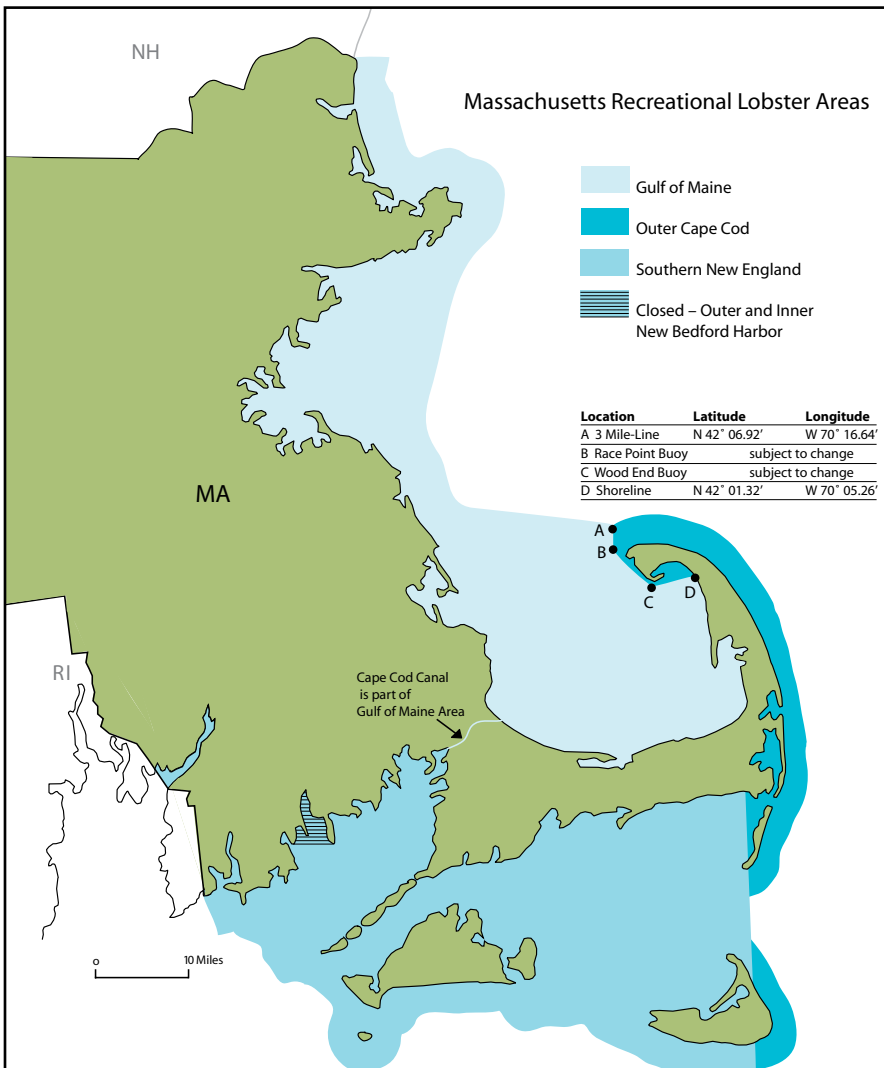
No buoyed traps may be set in the Cape Cod Canal. New Bedford Harbor is closed to lobster harvest north of a line from Ricketson's Point (Dartmouth) to Wilbur Point (Fairhaven).

Is reporting required?

Annual catch reports are required of all Recreational Lobster/Crabbing Permit holders. These forms are provided by Division of Marine Fisheries (*MarineFisheries*) at the time of renewal. Renewal licenses will not be issued until a catch report has been filed.

Do I need the permit if I intend to take only crabs by hand or dipnet?

No, you are exempt.



Recreational Regulations

Recreational Lobster Regulations	
Gulf of Maine Recreational Lobster Area	
Minimum Size	3¼"
Maximum Size	5"
V-Notched Females – Definitions	"Zero-Tolerance" – Illegal to harvest female with V-shaped notch of any size with or without setal hairs
Trap Limit	10 Traps
Escape Vent	One rectangular vent 1½" x 5¼" or two circular vents of 2⅞" in diameter
Bag Limit	15 per day
Outer Cape Cod Recreational Lobster Area	
Minimum Size	3⅝"
Maximum Size	–
V-Notched Females – Definitions	Illegal to harvest female with notch or indentation in base of flipper at least ¼" deep and tapering to sharp point without setal hairs
Trap Limit	10 Traps
Escape Vent	One rectangular vent 2" x 5¼" or two circular vents of 2⅞" in diameter
Bag Limit	15 per day
Southern New England Recreational Lobster Area	
Minimum Size	3⅝"
Maximum Size	5¼"
V-Notched Females – Definitions	Illegal to harvest female with notch or indentation in base of flipper at least ⅛" deep with or without setal hairs
Trap Limit	10 Traps
Escape Vent	One rectangular vent 2" x 5¼" or two circular vents of 2⅞" in diameter
Bag Limit	15 per day

Working to maintain a sustainable resource in the marine ecosystem.



**8 Otis Place • Scituate, MA
781-545-6984**



For more information on becoming a member or to BUY lobsters DIRECT from a lobsterman...

Visit lobstermen.com

Thank you for your continued support!



Taking Lobster at Night is Prohibited

Lobster may only be harvested from ½ hour before sunrise to ½ hour after sunset.

Egg-Bearing Females

It is unlawful to take or possess any egg-bearing female lobster. It is unlawful to land or possess any lobster:

1. from which eggs have been removed, or...
2. that has come in contact with any substance capable of removing lobster eggs.

Recreational Crab Regulations		
Species	Blue Crab	Other Edible Crabs (excludes Green Crabs)
Minimum Size	5" shell width (spine to spine)	None
Other Regulations	Egg-bearers cannot be taken; 25 crabs/day; no permit required unless using traps or SCUBA; closed season is Jan. 1 – Apr. 30, inclusive	50 crabs total per day (including up to 25 blue) – other regulations are the same as for blue crab

Crab Identification



Blue Crab



Rock Crab



Jonah Crab



Green Crab

Recreational Lobstering and Crabbing

How to Measure a Lobster

The Rules

Lobsters must be measured with a special gauge to make sure that they are “keepers.” The carapace length is measured from the rear of the eye socket to the rear of the carapace on a line parallel to the center line of the bodyshell.

All lobsters measuring less than the minimum legal carapace length, or larger than the maximum legal carapace length, must be immediately returned to the waters from which taken.

All lobsters must be measured immediately.

Mutilation

It shall be unlawful to possess any lobster, or part thereof, which is mutilated in a manner which makes accurate measurement impossible.

Note: A common error made by novices is to measure over the rostrum or horn located above the eye socket. Make certain that your gauge is in the extreme rear of the eye socket and below the horn.



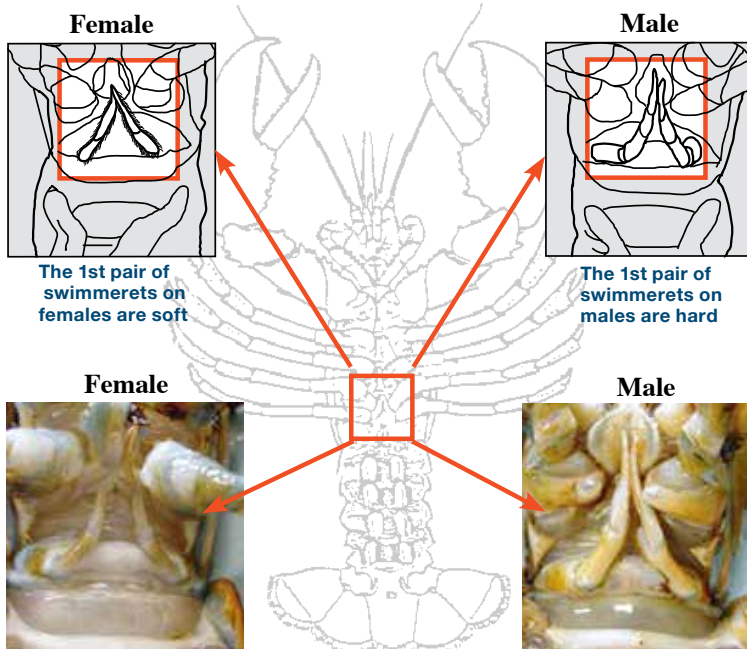
Correct Lobster Measurement



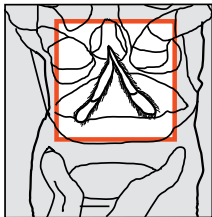
The gauge is placed in the rear of the eye socket.

Is it Male or Female?

In order to determine the sex of a lobster, you must look at the first pair of appendages under the tail, called swimmerets. They are positioned near the base of the last pair of walking legs. The first pair of swimmerets are hard in the male, and soft and feathery in the female.

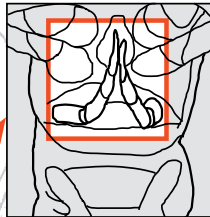


Female



The 1st pair of swimmerets on females are soft

Male



The 1st pair of swimmerets on males are hard

Female



Male



All About Lobster

What are they?

Lobsters are ten-legged (decapod) crustaceans.

The American lobster is the only species of clawed lobster in the Northwestern Atlantic region.

Where are they?

The American lobster is distributed throughout the Northwest Atlantic from the Straights of Bell Isle, Newfoundland to Cape Hatteras, North Carolina.

They are most abundant in coastal zones at depths of less than 150 ft. (~50 m). The greatest abundance of lobster occurs within the Gulf of Maine — from mid-coast Maine to southwest Nova Scotia.

Growth

American lobster is a long-lived species known to reach more than 40 lbs. (18 kg).

Age is unknown because all hard parts are shed and replaced at molting (shedding), leaving no accreting material for age determination. In Massachusetts, shedding typically occurs between June and October.

Lobsters at minimum legal size are generally considered to be between 5 and 7 years of age based on hatchery observations. Maximum age is generally considered to be between 30 and 40 years.

Biology

Fertilized eggs are carried on the female abdomen for a 9 to 12 month period of development prior to hatching.

Female lobsters carry between 1000 and >100,000 eggs depending on the size of the female.

Hatching typically occurs over a 4 month period from May through September. In Massachusetts we typically see peak hatching from late-June through early-July.

Egg-bearing Females

It is unlawful for any fisherman to take or possess any egg-bearing female lobster or female lobster with the egg mass removed, at any time.



When eggs are extruded they are dark green and the female is called a “green egger.”



As eggs develop and approach hatching time they turn brown and the female is called a “brown egger.”

V-Notching Regulations

What is a V-Notch?

A "v-notch" is a mark on the tail flipper of a female lobster that was put there by a commercial lobsterman as a means to identify and protect a known breeder in the population from harvest.

Commercial lobstermen make a v-notch in the tail flippers of egg-bearing female lobsters they encounter while fishing. The v-notch remains in the females flipper after she has hatched her eggs which protects her from harvest through additional molts.

V-Notching History

The practice of v-notching originated in Maine, and dates back to the early 1900's. Today it is intended as a means of protecting local broodstock.

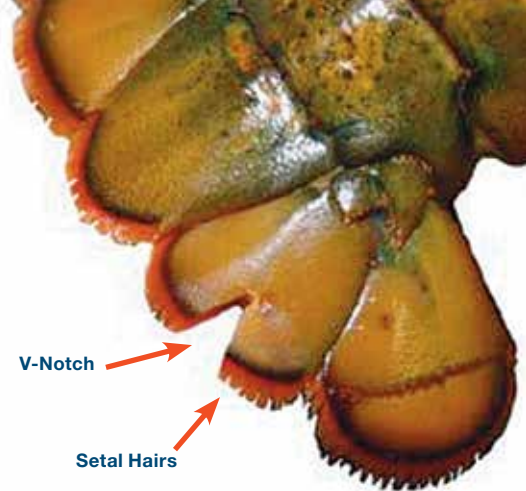
Which Flipper is Notched?

The tail flipper immediately to the right of the middle flipper, when the lobster is examined with the underside of the lobster down and its tail is toward the person making the determination.

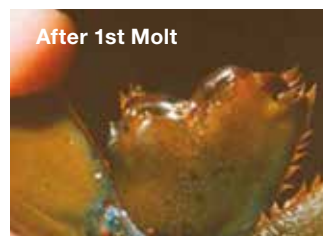
Recreational Lobster/Crab Permit holders are not required to v-notch egg-bearing female lobsters.

Mutilation

It is illegal to possess any female lobster in which the v-notch flipper is mutilated in a manner which could hide, obscure, or obliterate such a mark.



Below: Newly v-notched lobster and additional pictures of the v-notched lobster before and after it underwent two successive molts. Note that changes occurred even before the lobster molted.



SCUBA Regulations for Recreational Lobster/Crabbing



Permits and Conditions

A Recreational Lobster/Crabbing Permit endorsed for diving is required of all individuals who recreationally dive for lobsters in coastal waters.

No permit is required for the taking of edible crabs (including blue crabs) for use by immediate family if diving, dip-netting or using "star" traps, provided that the number of blue crabs does not exceed twenty-five (25) in one day, and fifty (50) total in one day for all edible crabs, and that no 6-sided pots or traps are used.

Gear Marking

Divers must display their assigned permit number upon their tank and dive flag or a floating marker (upright single panel at least 12" x 12", white background, black numerals at least 3" high, 1/2" in thickness or width of line on both sides of the marker). A group of divers may use only one floating marker listing the permit number of EACH diver in the group.

Catch Limits

There is a limit of **15 lobsters** per day per permit, and all lobsters must meet the legal requirements. Divers are required to measure all lobsters in possession prior to surfacing.

Taking of blue crabs and other edible crabs is prohibited from January 1 through April 30.

There is a limit of **25 blue crabs** per day.

There is a combined limit of **50 edible crabs (blue, Jonah and rock)** per day.

Gear Requirements

Every diver or group of divers, while swimming on or below the surface of the waters of the Commonwealth, is required by Massachusetts General Law to display a dive flag.

Flag must be at least 12" X 15" in area of red background with a white diagonal stripe.

The dive flag must be displayed on a boat or surface float.

It must extend at least 3 feet from the surface of the water.

Divers shall remain in an area within 100 feet of such displayed diver's flag while at or near the surface of the water.

Methods of Taking Lobsters and Crabs

Not Allowed: Massachusetts General Laws prohibits the taking of lobsters by spearing, dipping, or dragging.

Spearing – the use of a spear gun, pole spear, or any other object that may be used to pierce the shell of the lobster as a means of harvest.

Dipping - the use of a dip net.

Dragging - the use of mobile or hauled nets or dredges.

Snaring - the use of poles with loops.

Allowed: Harvesting of lobster by hand, or the use of an angled "tickle stick," which is a straight or slightly bent stick used to agitate a lobster into coming out of its hole.

Common Questions

I have a 10-pot Recreational permit, is it automatically endorsed for diving?

No. You must specify that you would like your permit to be endorsed for diving. There is no extra charge for this.

Does everyone in my dive group need a permit for taking lobster?

Yes. Each individual diver who intends to take lobster or crabs needs an individual permit. If diving in a group, each individual's permit number must be displayed on their tanks and on the surface floatation.

Does my diving permit cover the immediate members of my family as well?

No, diver permits are for the individual diver only.

Gear

All About Gear

Definitions

Single pots: individual lobster pots

Pot trawls: lobster pot trawls where single pots are tied together in a series and buoyed at both ends.

East end: the part of the pot trawl extending from 01° through 180° magnetic.

West end: the part of a pot trawl extending from 181° through 00° magnetic.

Groundline: the line connecting pots on a pot trawl.

Buoy line: lines connecting pots to surface buoys.

Sinking line: the line that has a specific gravity equal to or greater than that of seawater, 1.03, and does not float up in the water column.

Weak link: a breakable section or device that will part when subjected to specified poundage of pull pressure and, after parting, will result in a knotless end, no thicker than the diameter of the line, the so-called "bitter end" to prevent lodging in whale baleen.

How many traps can I set?

The Massachusetts Recreational Lobster Permit allows for **10 traps ONLY**.

Can I use "star" traps?

Open, collapsible wire traps, hauled by hand, such as the "star" trap, cannot be used to catch lobsters, but are legal for edible crabs.

Can someone else pull my traps?

Any immediate family member that resides in your household may pull your traps for you.

Trawls vs. Single Pots

A Recreational Lobster/Crabbing Permit allows for the use of pot trawls or single pots. Traditionally, Recreational Lobster Permit holders prefer to use single pots.

Permit Number/Gear Markings

Recreational Lobster Permit Holders must use the last 5 digits of their Customer ID number, located in the upper right hand corner of the permit, to mark gear.

- All buoys, pots, traps, cars, dive markers and air tanks must be marked with the licensee's 5-digit permit number.
- The permit number must be burned or cut into the surface at least 1/2" deep x 1/8" thick.
- In the case of non-wooden traps, said numbers shall be burned or cut into a wooden lath or plate made of durable synthetic material, which shall be permanently secured to the inside of the trap.
- Recreational permit holders must also add the letter "N" preceding their 5-digit permit number, followed by a (-) with a single digit from 0 to 9, indicating the sequential pot number in the series that the permit holder is fishing. (This gear-marking requirement negates the need for trap tags for recreational lobster permit holders.)
- Existing gear can be marked with the new permit number and the former permit number crossed out.

Minimum Requirements

Single pots - Single pots shall each be marked with a single 7" x 7" or 5" x 11" buoy. Sticks are optional, but if used, shall not have a flag attached.

Pot trawls - The east end of a pot trawl shall be marked with a double buoy, consisting of any combination of two 7" x 7" or 5" x 11" buoys and one or more three foot sticks (so the two buoys can be side-by-side or stacked). The west end of a pot trawl shall be marked with a single 7" x 7" or 5" x 11" buoy with a three foot stick and a flag.

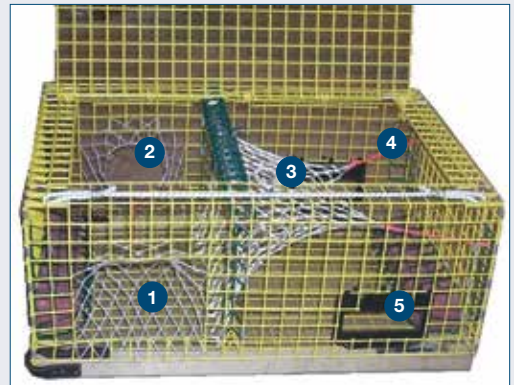
Buoy Colors

Each applicant for a Recreational Lobster Permit can choose up to three colors for the desired color scheme of their buoys. All buoys used by the permit holder must be marked with that specific color scheme.



Anatomy of a Lobster Trap

1. **Entrance Head:** Mesh opening where lobsters enter the trap.
2. **Kitchen:** This is where the bait bag is placed to attract lobsters into the trap.
3. **Parlor Head or Funnel:** Lobsters use this mesh netting as a means out of the kitchen, assuming it's a way out of the trap.
4. **Parlor:** Area where the lobsters end up after leaving the kitchen and traveling up the funnel. Most of the catch will be found in this part of the trap.
5. **Escape Vent/Ghost Panel:** Opening of designated size that allows sub-legal lobsters to escape the trap. The biodegradable materials used to attach the escape vent panel will allow the "ghost panel" to open if the trap has been lost or abandoned. This prevents the trap from continuing to fish after it has been lost or abandoned.





Gear Construction Requirements

Restrictions

It is unlawful for any person to take or attempt to take lobsters or crabs by use of pots or traps without said pots or traps having the following features:

- Ghost Panel
- Escape Vent

It is also unlawful for any lobster/crab trap to exceed a volume of 22,950 cubic inches.

Ghost Panel

Ghost panels are designed to create an opening to allow the escapement of lobsters within 12 months after a trap has been abandoned or lost.

Ghost panel specifications:

- The opening covered by the panel must be rectangular and measure at least 3 3/4" by 3 3/4"
- It must be located in the outer parlor section of the trap and in a position which allows an unobstructed exit of lobsters from the trap.
- The panel must be constructed of, or fastened to the trap with, one of the following materials: wood lath; cotton, hemp, sisal or jute twine not greater than 3/16" in diameter; or non-stainless, uncoated ferrous metal not greater than 3/32" in diameter.

Escape Vent

Escape vents are required in order to allow sub-legal lobsters and other non-targeted species to escape lobster/crab traps.

It is required that one or more rectangular escape vents or openings, or two or more unobstructed round openings, be placed in the parlor section of the trap.

If your traps have two parlors, **BOTH** must be vented.

Recreational fishermen fishing in the Gulf of Maine Recreational Lobster/Crabbing Area: Rectangular escape vents must be at least 1 1/16" by 5 3/4" or two circular vents must measure at least 2 7/16" in diameter.

Recreational fishermen fishing in the Outer Cape Cod or Southern New England Recreational Lobster Areas: Rectangular escape vents must measure at least 2" by 5 3/4" or two circular vents must measure at least 2 5/8" in diameter.

Gear Questions

Can the escape vent be used as the ghost panel?

Yes. The escape vent may serve as a ghost panel if incorporated into a panel constructed of, or attached to the trap with: wood lath, cotton, hemp, sisal or jute twine not greater than 3/16" in diameter; or non-stainless, uncoated ferrous metal not greater than 3/32" in diameter, and upon breakdown of the degradable materials, will create an opening for egress of lobsters at least 3 3/4" by 3 3/4".

Can the door of the trap be considered a ghost panel?

Yes. The door of the trap may serve as the ghost panel if fastened to the trap with: wood lath, cotton, hemp, sisal or jute twine not greater than 3/16" in diameter; or non-stainless, uncoated ferrous metal not greater than 3/32" diameter.

Do escape vents and ghost panels need to be attached in a specific orientation?

No. Escape vents and ghost panels need to provide an unobstructed means for escape for lobsters and must be located in the parlor section of the trap. It has been observed, however, that certain orientations work better than others (see below).

If I use wood traps do I need a ghost panel?

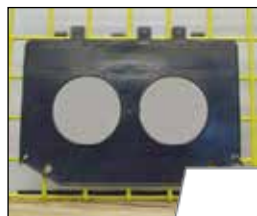
Traps constructed entirely or partially of wood shall be considered to be in compliance if constructed of wood lath to the extent that deterioration of wooden component(s) will result in an unobstructed opening at least 3 3/32" by 3 3/32".

Why are there rectangular and circular vent options?

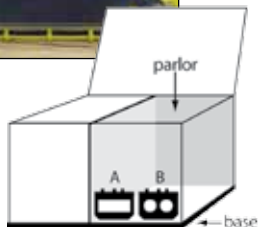
Circular vents retain crabs better than rectangular vents.

Escape Vent and Ghost Panel Placement

• **Note:** These examples are meant to be used as suggestions for escape vent and ghost panel placement in lobster traps. It is NOT required that escape vents and ghost panels be positioned in any way, except to provide an "unobstructed" means for escape by sub-legal lobsters.

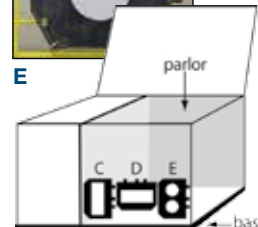


More Effective Placement In Allowing Escapement of Sublegal Lobsters



Less Effective Placement In Allowing Escapement of Sublegal Lobsters

• Less effective locations for escape vent panels include the inside of a trap and the upper panel and door.



Whale-Related Gear Rules

Year Round:

Massachusetts state waters are important habitat for endangered large whale species, including the humpback whale and North Atlantic right whale. Entanglement in fishing gear is a major cause of injury and mortality for large whales. *Marine Fisheries* requires the use of modified fishing gear in order to reduce the risk of whale entanglement and identify entangling gear.

The following restrictions apply to all recreational pots set on a year round basis.

1. All buoys must be outfitted with a 600-pound weak link. See photo.
2. If fishing pot trawls, sinking groundline must be used between all traps.



Buoy Line Marking

By marking the rope, that gear can be identified to a certain area and fishery, if it is taken off an entangled whale.

3. Vertical buoy lines must be made of sinking line, except the bottom 1/3 portion, which may be floating line if desired.
4. All gear must have a 4 inch red marker midway on the buoy line. See photo.

Swivel Weak Links



Hog Ring Weak Link



Weak Links

Weak links allow the buoy to part away from the buoy line in the event that a whale encounters your gear.

Definitions

Single: one pot with a single buoy line attached.

Double: two pot string of traps with a single buoy line attached.

Twin orange markers: a pair of identical orange flag-like strips of material that are clearly visible and attached to the buoy stick or high flyer.

Triple: three pot string of traps with a single buoy line attached.

Sinking line: a line that has a specific gravity greater than that of seawater, 1.03, and does not float up in the water column.

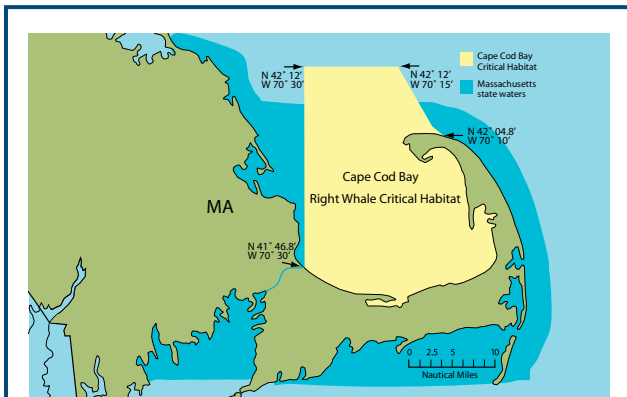
Weak Link: breakable section or device that will part when subjected to specified poundage of pull pressure and after parting, will result in a knot-less end, no thicker than the diameter of the line, the so-called "bitter end," to prevent lodging in whale baleen.

For more details please see <http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dmf/publications/weaklink.pdf>

Abandon or dispose of at sea: to leave fixed gear in the water without hauling it at least every 30 days or in prohibited areas during prohibited periods.

Seasonal:

Cape Cod Bay Critical Habitat Gear Rules



The North Atlantic right whale is one of the most endangered large whales in the world. Cape Cod Bay (CCB) is federally-designated as Critical Habitat for the species. Right whales return to this area each winter and spring to feed on the abundant zooplankton in the bay. To reduce the risk of entanglement in fishing gear in this important habitat, *Marine Fisheries* requires compliance with strict seasonal gear restrictions during the time the whales are present.

January 1 – May 15

During the period of **January 1st to May 15th**, the following restrictions apply to all gear in the CCB Critical Habitat Area.

1. **The use of single pots is prohibited.** Fishermen may use either multiple pot trawls consisting of four pots or more or may set doubles or triples.
 - a. Multiple pot trawls shall consist of four pots or more with vertical buoy lines on the first and last pot of the trawl.

2. **Double or triple pot trawls must have only 1 buoy line.**

a. It is unlawful to fish double or triple pot trawls with more than one vertical buoy line attached.

3. **All trawls must have twin orange markers or flags on each buoy.** See definition above.

4. **All trawls must have 500 pound weak links on each buoy.** See details above.

5. **All trawls must have a 4 inch red marker midway on each buoy line.** See details above.

May 16 – December 31

The following restrictions apply to all gear in the CCB Critical Habitat Area on a year-round basis.

1. All buoys must be outfitted with a 600-pound weak link. See details above.
2. If fishing pot trawls, sinking groundline must be used between all traps.

3. **Vertical buoy lines must be made of sinking line, except the bottom 1/3 portion, which may be floating line if desired.**

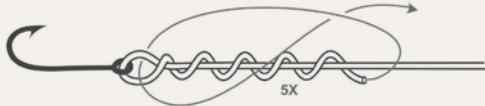
4. **All gear must have a 4 inch red marker midway on the buoy line.** See details above.

These and more fishing knots are available on waterproof plastic cards at www.proknot.com

Improved Clinch Knot

The improved clinch knot has become one of the most popular knots for tying terminal tackle connections. It is quick and easy to tie and is strong and reliable.

The knot can be difficult to tie in lines in excess of 30 lb test. Five+ turns around the standing line is generally recommended, four can be used in heavy line. This knot is not recommended with braided lines.



1. Thread end of the line through the eye of the hook, swivel or lure. Double back and make five or more turns around the standing line. Bring the end of the line through the first loop formed behind the eye, then through the big loop.



2. Wet knot and pull slightly on the tag end to draw up coils. Pull on the standing line to form knot with coils pressed neatly together.



3. Slide tight against eye and clip tag end.

Rapala Knot

The rapala knot is a popular method to tie a lure or fly to a line such that it can move freely and unimpeded by the knot.

1. Tie a loose overhand knot and feed the tag end through the eye and back through the overhand knot.



2. Make 3 turns around the standing line and bring tag end back through overhand knot.



3. Pass tag end through loop that is formed.

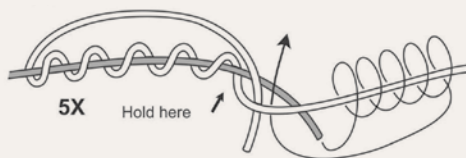


4. Moisten line. Pull on standing line while holding tag end to close knot. Pull on both tag and standing line to tighten knot down.



Blood Knot

Use this knot to join sections of leader or line together. It works best with line of approximately equal diameter.



1. Overlap ends of lines to be joined. Twist one around the other making 5 turns. Bring tag end back between the two lines. Repeat with other end, wrapping in opposite direction the same number of turns.



2. Slowly pull lines or leaders in opposite directions. Turns will wrap and gather.

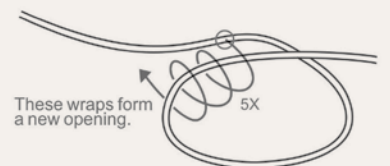


3. Pull tight and clip ends closely.

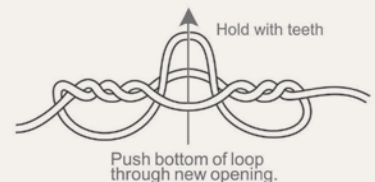
Dropper Loop Knot

This knot forms a loop anywhere on a line. Hooks or other tackle can then be attached to the loop.

1. Form a loop in the line at the desired location. Pull line from one side of loop down and pass it through and around that side of loop. Make 5+ wraps around the loop, keeping a thumb or forefinger in the new opening which is formed.



2. Press bottom of original loop up through new opening and hold with teeth. Wet knot with saliva and pull both ends in opposite directions.



3. Pull ends of line firmly until coils tighten and loop stands out from line.



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