

MASSACHUSETTS Saltwater

SPECIAL SHOW EDITION

FULL REGULATIONS COMING IN APRIL

▶ **NEW**
Artificial Reef

page 13

2017 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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On the Cover:

A large male black sea bass caught on a bright chartreuse jig will make some charter customer very happy.

Photo by Capt. Mel True
www.captainmeltrue.com



Put down those electronic devices; leave the web for a while; get fishing!

After about one year as *Marine Fisheries*' Director I've come to appreciate the great importance and impressive value of marine recreational fisheries found here in our Bay State. Whether from shore, a boat, or a for-hire charter or headboat vessel—targeting striped bass, cod, haddock, flounders, tautog, black sea bass, fluke, scup or bluefish, just to name a few—you're guaranteed to have a terrific experience on the water. These fisheries are supported by vital shore-side bait and tackle services and boat providers. Many men, women, and children captivated by the wonders of the deep and shallows are these fisheries' critical core.



David E. Pierce, Ph.D.
Director

I've also come to understand how our Marine Recreational Fisheries Development Panel's advice and guidance have kept us focused on how best to spend saltwater fishing permit fees for improving angler access and opportunities. For example, in the spring of 2016 these funds helped create the Harwich artificial reef, as well as the reconstruction of the Bass River fishing pier.

Collecting accurate and detailed recreational fisheries' data is a top priority for *Marine Fisheries*. Angler surveys are conducted statewide as part of the federal Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP). Survey results provide scientists with important data used in stock assessments and many parts of the fisheries management process. Your continued participation and cooperation with samplers along the coast is paramount to the success and sustainability of our rich recreational fisheries.

This 2017 Saltwater Recreational Fishing Guide is one way we demonstrate our high regard for marine recreational anglers and the industries that support them. Take note of the table listing Massachusetts Saltwater Fishing Derby Winners. I'll be there to recognize the 2016 award recipients. I look forward to record-breaking weights and lengths giving continued evidence that anglers are serious in their pursuit of the big one that won't get away and benefit from *Marine Fisheries*' conservation measures designed to make recreational fishing a most rewarding experience. So, put down your electronic devices; get out on the water; leave the web for a while; and get fishing!



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January 2017



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The Division of Marine Fisheries

The Department of Fish and Game's 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 your local Recreational Fisheries Biologists.

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

To get up to date rule changes and notices you can also join the *Marine Fisheries* 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.



The Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries website has:

- Commercial and recreational regulations
- Saltwater Fishing Derby standings
- Permit applications
- *Marine Fisheries* publications and much more!

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 Fisheries Program Biologists

South Shore Office:

Quest Center,
1213 Purchase St.
New Bedford, MA 02740
(508) 990-2860
FAX: (508) 990-0449

John Boardman
S. Shore/S. Coast

Annisquam River Marine Fisheries Station:

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Gloucester, MA 01930
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FAX: (617) 727-3337

Matt Ayer
North Shore/Metro Boston

Boston Office:

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FAX: (617) 626-1509



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 Number:
1-800-632-8075



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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.

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ATTENTION ANGLERS: REWARD

Acoustic Tagging Research

Marine Fisheries is conducting three tagging studies to investigate the coastal movements of striped bass and the discard mortality rate for haddock and cusk. Fish have been both internally and externally tagged with acoustic transmitters.



Acoustically tagged striped bass



Acoustic transmitter



Haddock tagged with acoustic transmitter



Acoustic receiver

If you recapture a tagged fish:
Record the: **Date caught, location, length, weight, and tag number.**
If the fish is being harvested, **retain the internal tag.**

To claim your reward contact:
MA Division of Marine Fisheries
Bill Hoffman..... (978) 282-0308 ext. 106
Bill.Hoffman@state.ma.us

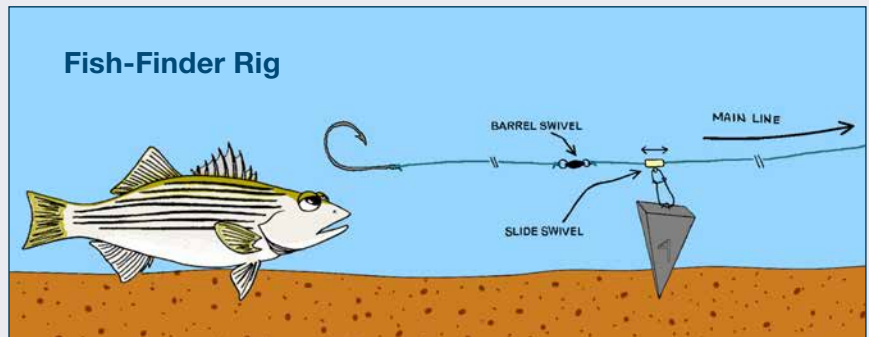
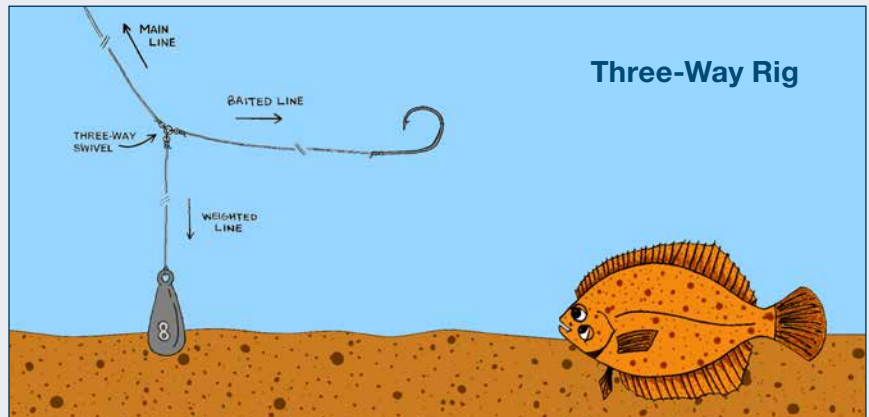


Cusk caught recreationally

Common Rigs Used for Bait Fishing

Three-Way Rig: Gets its name from using a three-way swivel and is useful for catching striped bass, tautog, winter flounder, and just about any other bottom-dwelling species. Various lengths (6-24 inches) can be used for the weighed leader which carries the bait down in the water column. The baited leader (12-36 inches) presents live or dead bait when stationary or drifting and can be used to slow-troll plugs or other lures.

Fish-Finder Rig: A simple rig to set-up and tie that can be used when fishing for multiple species from shore. This rig allows for large pieces of bait to be presented and allows for the fish to ingest the bait before setting the hook. The weight on the slide swivel holds the line down but allows for the bait to be dropped back to fish such as striped bass, fluke, and many others.

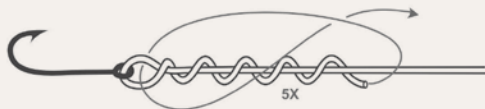


These and more fishing knots are available on waterproof plastic cards at www.proknot.com

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.



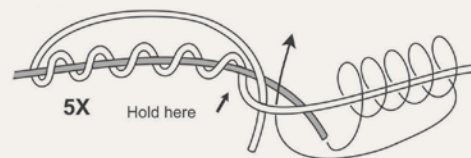
2. Wet knot and pull slightly on the tag end to draw up coils. Pull on the standing line to form knot with coils pressed neatly together.



3. Slide tight against eye and clip tag end.

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.

2017 Saltwater Fishing Permit

Get Your **2017** Saltwater Fishing Permit Today!

Who Needs a Permit?

All anglers age 16 or older that wish to engage in the recreational activity of finfishing, with the following exceptions:

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

Reciprocity

- All permitted MA residents may fish in the three neighboring coastal states (NH, RI, CT)
- Permitted anglers from these three neighboring coastal states may also fish in MA waters

Permit Fee

- The fee for an individual angler (resident or non-resident) is \$10
- No charge for anglers age 60 or over

How will the permit fee money be used?

All money from permit fees are 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 anglers
- Development and implementation of education materials for the public
- Other marine recreational fishing programs approved by the recreational fishing development panel

To Obtain a 2017 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:

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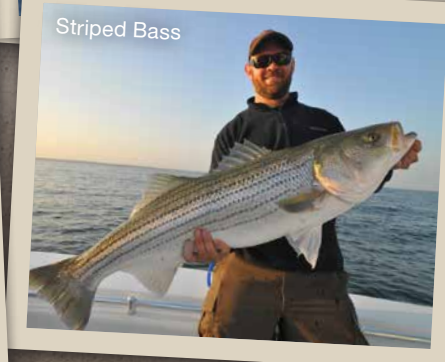
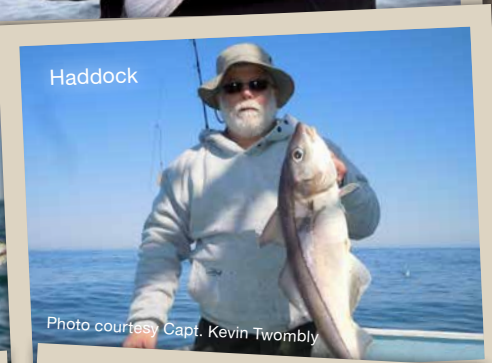
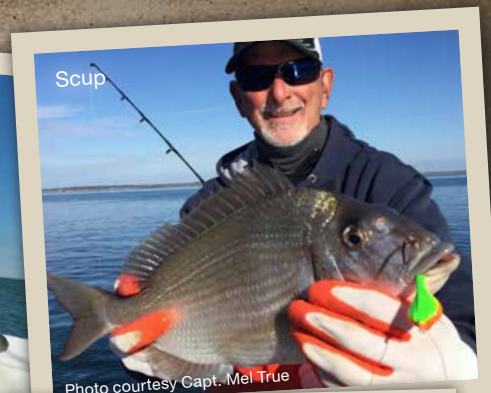
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Have You Fished Today?

Here's What You Could Be Catching!



Know How To Handle Your Fish — Both On The Line and Off

Use circle hooks.

Circle hooks, along with barbless hooks, greatly reduce the chance of lethally wounding a fish. Make sure that the point is in line with the shank and not offset (often sold as octopus circle hooks); this is especially important in catch and release.

Have a fair fight.

Use appropriate tackle for the size and species of fish you're trying to catch. Stay focused when reeling in fish as higher stress levels and often higher mortality rates are associated with longer fight times.

Stay wet.

When the fish gets close, be sure to handle the fish with wet hands. Using a dry cloth or gloves can remove both slime and scales, both needed for the fish's health.

Keep it in the water.

If you aren't going to keep or measure the fish, try to remove the hook with the fish in the water. This will keep the fish happier and both you and your boat cleaner!

Support the fish.

When removing a fish from the water, be sure to support the full body weight. Place your hand under the belly of the fish as you lift it out of the water. Don't ever grab the fish by the gills or eyes and never hold the fish up by only its jaw.

Get that hook out.

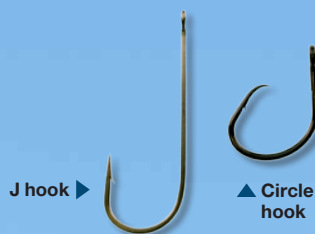
Hopefully you're using a circle hook, but whatever hook it is, get it out quickly. Use a dehooker if you don't need to pull the fish out of the water or pliers if necessary to remove a stubborn hook. If the hook is deep in the mouth or gut, simply cut the line as close to the hook as possible before releasing the fish.

Reduce time out of the water.

The longer the fish stays out of the water, the greater the chance of mortality. Get a quick photo or measurement and get it back into the water. Be sure to know the regulations before you start fishing so there is no question as to what the size limit is.

Don't just toss it back.

Remember, a fish out of water is holding its breath! Help it take a "deep breath" by releasing it head-first. If necessary, hold onto the fish and move it back and forth in the water to increase flow of oxygen-rich water over its gills before letting it go.

A logo consisting of a triangle with the words 'Circle' on the left side, 'Hooks' on the right side, and 'Save Fish' at the bottom. Inside the triangle are three small illustrations of fish: one at the top, one in the middle, and one at the bottom. A circle hook is also depicted inside the triangle.

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



Black Sea Bass

The black sea bass is one of the most valuable recreational fish species in Massachusetts waters. Members of the family Serranidae (that include other sea bass and groupers) they are extremely fun to catch and a delicious fish to eat. Inhabiting Atlantic coastal waters, black sea bass range from the Gulf of Maine to the Florida Keys, but they are most abundant in areas from Cape Cod to Cape Canaveral, Florida. Black sea bass prey upon many different animals including fish, crabs, mussels, and other invertebrates. As a very structure oriented fish, black sea bass inhabit reefs, rocky bottom, areas around pilings, wrecks, and jetties..

One amazing thing about black sea bass is that they are protogynous hermaphrodites. This means that many fish begin life as females and then between the age of 2-6 years will change sex to become males. This is not the only species of fish that makes this change as there are other groupers, wrasses, and parrotfish that do as well. There has been lots of research into the mechanisms for change in

these fish; however, the exact reason and timing of change for each fish is not well understood. It may be based on the ratio of males to females in an area. Changes to the ratio, due to removals from natural mortality or fishing activity, may cause a larger female to transition to a male.

Male and female black sea bass can be distinguished by several external features when caught. Males tend to be darker in color with some having blue-green coloring around the eyes and on the dorsal side of the body. In the largest males there is also a hump that forms on the top of the head above the eyes in front of the dorsal fin. The males often have a long fin-ray that extends past the longest part of the tail fin. Female black sea bass are lighter in color and are more of a gray to brownish hue.

As a migratory species, black sea bass generally arrive in Massachusetts waters in early May. One of the ways to target black sea bass is to tip a hook with a piece of squid or crab and drop it down along with a weight to the bottom and wait for the bite. Anglers can also



Photo courtesy Capt. Mel True

Above: A large keeper sea bass is held high by a proud young fisherman
Below: Three charter patrons hold up some of their catch from a successful day of fishing

use baited or un-baited jigs dropped on structure to add movement that can entice black sea bass to bite.

However you get out on the water to catch black sea bass, just be ready. Once you hook into these fun to catch and eat fish, you'll never want to stop!



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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 and funds generated from the sale of recreational fishing permits, 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 twelve *Marine Fisheries* properties and/or FBA properties or facilities providing anglers with access to shore fishing locations:

- Wareham River Fish Pier, Wareham
- Craven's Landing at Scortons Creek, Sandwich
- Popponeset Beach Shorefishing Area, Mashpee
- Parker River Fishing Pier, Yarmouth
- Bass River Fishing Pier, Yarmouth
- Dogfish Bar, Aquinnah
- Great Rock Bight Shorefishing Area, Chilmark
- Leland Beach, Edgartown
- Fore River Shorefishing Area, Quincy
- Broad Cove Shorefishing Area, Somerset
- Cashman Park Fishing Pier, Newburyport
- Oak Bluffs Fishing Pier, Martha's Vineyard

For a full listing of access sites, see pages 25-29.



Artificial reef created in Nantucket Sound to enhance recreational fishing

Artificial reefs are man-made structures intentionally placed on the seafloor to create fish habitat. Many Atlantic coast states use artificial reefs to entice marine life into areas with little to no structure.

The creation of artificial reefs in the United States was first documented in South Carolina in 1830, where local fishermen sank log huts to improve fishing. Since then, thousands of artificial reefs have been developed, particularly in the south Atlantic region. These reefs are popular destinations for millions of recreational anglers. In 2016, *MarineFishes* used Recreational Saltwater Fishing Permit revenue to create the first recreational fishing reef in Massachusetts in almost two decades.

On March 23, 2016, sixteen hundred cubic yards of concrete rubble was deployed into the waters of Nantucket Sound, two miles south of Saquatucket Harbor. Dubbed Harwich Reef, the area is almost 10 acres in size and lies in 32 feet of water. Structures extend three to six feet off the bottom and are spread out in patches, making a diverse habitat perfect for reef and visiting marine life.

Motivated by the success of a 128-acre artificial reef off Yarmouth—originally deployed in 1978—several for-hire boat captains on Cape Cod requested *MarineFishes* investigate a possible new reef site in Nantucket Sound. Site selection and permitting for the Harwich Reef began in 2007. It took over four years to get the appropriate permits



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and surveys complete. Hundreds of hours were spent between diving and assessing photos of the sea floor to find the best site. Forward thinking Harwich officials set aside clean concrete debris during the demolition of Harwich High School to use as reefing material. By spring of 2014, permits had been secured and 1,000 cubic yards of material was available for deployment. In early March 2016, material was trucked from Harwich to a waiting barge in New Bedford Harbor. Once loaded, the barge made its way to the site, deploying materials the morning of March 23. The Harwich Reef was born.

During the permitting and planning process, *Marine Fisheries* proposed a regulation

to address potential user group conflicts at the site. On June 28, 2016, the Massachusetts Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission approved a regulation prohibiting all commercial fishing activity on the reef site and within a buffer zone extending an additional 328 feet from the site in all directions. The Harwich artificial reef site became the first and only site in Massachusetts dedicated exclusively to recreational saltwater fishing.

Fish and other animals moved in almost immediately. *Marine Fisheries* staff received reports of recreational anglers catching their black sea bass bag limit (five fish, each 15 inches or larger) at the site on May 21—the opening day of the

2016 recreational season. In June, our dive survey team saw black sea bass, scup, and tautog of legal and sublegal size. An acoustic receiver deployed in April recorded several tagged striped bass on the reef by the third week of May and twelve different striped bass travelling in the vicinity of the reef over the course of the recreational season. Other acoustically tagged fish picked up by the receiver included an Atlantic sturgeon in May and a white shark in October. Recreational anglers were able to enjoy the reef throughout the summer season and well into November.

Since deployment, the reef has been very popular with Cape Cod residents and visitors. On April 30, a Rockin' the Reef benefit was held in Harwich. The event was attended by many local reef enthusiasts and generated several thousand dollars for future reef research and development. The Harwich harbormasters office has developed outreach materials and posted the reef site coordinates on the town website to help provide information to users interested in the reef. The site is expected to provide additional recreational fishing opportunities and generate considerable economic benefits to the region for decades to come.

As the reef ages, it will undergo various stages of colonization and succession by marine life. Eventually the reef will look less like a man-made habitat and more like a natural one. More information on this and other artificial reef sites in Massachusetts can be found at www.mass.gov/dmf/artificialreefs.



Left: An excavator deploys concrete material from a barge on the new Harwich Reef
Right: Tautog photographed on the new reef in August of 2016

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





The new reef site located just off of Harwich in Nantucket Sound



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Recreational Saltwater Fishing Regulations

Regulations listed below are subject to change during the 2017 season.

Species	Note	Min. Size	Open Periods	Possession Limits
American Eel	(1)	9"	All Year	25 fish
American Shad	(2)	None	All Year	Closed with exceptions
Black Sea Bass	(3,7)	See www.mass.gov/marinefisheries for current regulations.		
Blue Marlin		Federal rules apply. Consult NOAA Fisheries.		
Bluefish		None	All Year	10 fish
Cod (North of Cape Cod)	(4,5)	See www.mass.gov/marinefisheries for current regulations.		
Cod (South & East of Cape Cod)	(4,5)	22"	All Year	10 fish
Dab (Plaice)	(4,5)	14"	All Year	None
Fluke (Summer Flounder)		See www.mass.gov/marinefisheries for current regulations.		
Gray Sole (Witch)	(4,5)	14"	All Year	None
Haddock (North of Cape Cod)	(4,5)	See www.mass.gov/marinefisheries for current regulations.		
Halibut	(4,5)	41"	All Year	1 fish
Monkfish	(4,5)	None	All Year	None
Pollock	(4,5)	None	All Year	None
Redfish	(4,5)	None	All Year	None
River Herring		Harvest, possession, sale and use are prohibited.		
Sailfish		Federal rules apply. Consult NOAA Fisheries.		
Scup	(7)	See www.mass.gov/marinefisheries for current regulations.		
Sharks (excludes spiny dogfish)		See www.mass.gov/marinefisheries for current regulations.		
Smelt		None	June 16 – March 14	50 fish
Spiny Dogfish		None	All year	None
Striped Bass	(6)	28"	All year	1 fish
Tautog		16"	All year	3 fish
Tunas		Federal rules apply. Consult NOAA Fisheries.		
Weakfish		16"	All year	1 fish
White Marlin		Federal rules apply. Consult NOAA Fisheries.		
White Perch		8"	All year	25 fish
Windowpane Flounder	(4,5)	Prohibited		
Winter Flounder (North of Cape Cod)	(4,5)	12"	All year	8 fish
Winter Flounder (South & East of Cape Cod)	(4,5)	12"	March 1 – December 31	2 fish
Wolffish	(4,5)	Prohibited		
Yellowtail Flounder	(4,5)	13"	All year	None

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.

Notes:

- 1) Subject to regulation by the Division and the municipality. Please consult municipal regulations.
- 2) American 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.
- 3) 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.
- 4) Federal rules apply beyond state waters. Consult NOAA Fisheries for permitting requirements and regulations.
- 5) It is unlawful to fish with hook and line gear in the Winter Cod Conservation Closure from November 15 through January 31. It is unlawful to take cod from the Spring Cod Conservation Closure from April 16 through July 21.
- 6) Striped bass must be kept whole, meaning the head, tail, and body remain intact. Only evisceration is allowed. Permitted for-hire vessels may fillet striped bass for their customers.
- 7) Black sea bass and scup may be filleted but not skinned while at-sea. No more than two fillets per allowed fish may be possessed.

Massachusetts Saltwater Fish Records

Species	Weight	Location	Date	Angler
Albacore	65 lb.	Canyons	8/23/03	Tommy Good
Bigeye Tuna	231 lb.	Oceanographer Canyon	8/28/10	Randy Parda
Black Sea Bass	8 lb. 15 oz.	Buzzards Bay	5/12/07	Aaron Costa
Bluefish	27 lb. 4 oz.	Graves Light	9/11/82	Louis Gordon
Bluefin Tuna	1228 lb.	Cape Cod Bay	9/23/84	Marlene Goldstein
Blue Marlin*	873 lb.	Canyons	8/21/15	Dr. Ralph DeLaTorre
Blue Shark	458 lb. 2 oz.	Jeffreys Ledge	8/9/11	Ethan Lynch
Bonito	13 lb. 8 oz.	New Bedford Dike	9/23/02	Eddie Gomez
Cod	92 lb.	Jeffreys Ledge	7/5/87	Robert Radzik
Coho Salmon	18 lb. 8 oz.	North River	1/21/86	James Lewis
Cusk	34 lb. 4 oz.	Stellwagen Bank	7/15/90	Gabe Silvestrone
Dolphin	61 lb. 3 oz.	Veatch Canyon	8/8/09	Ty Warren
False Albacore	19 lb. 5 oz.	Edgartown	9/27/90	Donald MacGillivray
Fluke	21 lb. 8 oz.	Nomans Island	9/25/80	Joseph Czapiga
Haddock	20 lb.	Stellwagen Bank	1972	Don Rehnstrom
	20 lb.	Boston Lightship	8/3/74	Joseph Gelsomini
Halibut	321 lb.	Massachusetts Bay	7/21/65	Norman Cournoyer
King Mackerel	8 lb. 6 oz.	Lucas Shoals	9/27/08	Tim Broderick
Mackerel	3 lb. 8 oz.	Hampton Shoal	10/9/94	Steve Ostrander
Mako Shark	1324 lb.	Massachusetts Bay	7/27/99	Kevin Scola
Pollock	48 lb. 2 oz.	Cashes Ledge	9/14/92	Sal Mocerino
Porbeagle	495 lb.	Offshore	7/22/11	Jesse Siegel
Scup	5 lb. 14 oz.	Nomans Island	10/17/83	Robert Pimental
Spanish Mackerel	8 lb.	Vineyard Sound	10/8/11	Joe Canha
Striped Bass	73 lb.	Quicks Hole	1913	Charles Church
	73 lb.	Sow and Pigs	1967	Charles Cinto
	73 lb.	Nauset Beach	11/3/81	Anton Stetzko
Swordfish	646 lb.	Nomans Island	1972	Albert Little
Tautog	22 lb. 9 oz.	Gay Head	6/29/78	Michael Horsely
Thresher	630 lb.	Offshore	7/23/11	Timothy Delude
Wahoo	182 lb. 12 oz.	Offshore	2016	Derek Wittkamper
Weakfish	18 lb. 12 oz.	Buzzards Bay	8/19/84	George Mahoney
White Marlin	131 lb.	Nantucket	7/30/82	Ted Nfatzger
Winter Flounder	8 lb. 2 oz.	Georges Bank	7/12/96	Tom Hillebrand
Wolffish	55 lb.	Cape Cod Bay	6/19/00	Andrew Glovsky
Yellowfin Tuna	187 lb.	Nantucket	8/5/90	Mark Boujoukos

How to Measure Your Catch

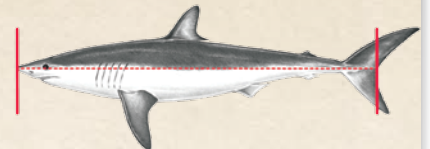


For Massachusetts marine waters minimum fish sizes are measured as **total length**. This is the greatest straight line length (not curved over the body) in inches as measured on a fish with its mouth closed from the anterior tip of the jaw or snout to the farthest extremity of the tail. Fish should 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.

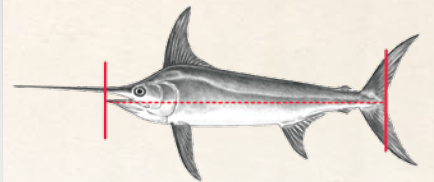
Exceptions:



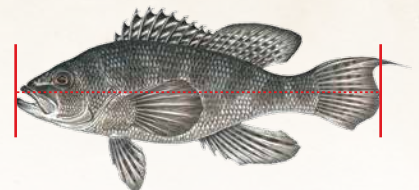
Tunas are measured using curved fork length. This is in a line, tracing the contour of the body from the tip of the upper jaw to the fork of the tail.



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.



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.

* New state record

Massachusetts Saltwater Fishing Derby

Sponsored by *Marine Fisheries*

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 or head boat captains having 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 on a certified scale at an official weigh station. Weighmasters can be found at most local marinas and tackle shops (see list beginning on page 38 or go to www.mass.gov/marinefisheries). We would also like to remind participants that every 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 1st.

Eligible Species	Minimum WT (lb.)
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 (lb.)
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.

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2016 Massachusetts Saltwater Fishing Derby Winners

Species	Division	Heaviest Fish	Angler
Black Sea Bass	Men	5 lb. 12 oz.	Frank Mazzulli
	Women	4 lb. 12 oz.	Crystle Calvin
	Junior	6 lb. 5 oz.	Jack Gulachenski
Bluefish	Men	18 lb. 10 oz.	Tavin Beagle
	Women	15 lb. 12 oz.	Brenna McCoubrey
	Junior	12 lb. 4 oz.	John Clark
Bonito	Men	9 lb. 12 oz.	Brian Nunes-Vais
	Women	10 lb. 2 oz.	Tammy King
Dolphin	Men	24 lb. 5 oz.	Alex Avila
	Women	17 lb.	Joanne Cameron
False Albacore	Women	10 lb. 6 oz.	Frances Clay
	Junior	11 lb. 13 oz.	Dylan Kadison
Fluke	Men	15 lb. 6 oz.	Emilson Leite
	Women	13 lb. 13 oz.	Keely Ahlstrom
	Junior	11 lb. 15 oz.	William Seaberg
Halibut	Men	89 lb.	Jeff Lema
	Women	102 lb.	Kay Starzynski
King Mackerel	Men	6 lb. 14 oz.	Bill Potter
Scup	Men	2 lb. 8 oz.	Matthew Kelly
	Women	2 lb. 13 oz.	Beverly Bergeron
	Junior	2 lb. 9 oz.	Joseph Pearle

Species	Division	Heaviest Fish	Angler
Striped Bass	Men	53 lb. 14 oz.	Michael Jones
	Women	51 lb. 10 oz.	Amy Burrell
	Junior	49 lb. 6 oz.	Michael Bridges
Tautog	Men	9 lb. 14 oz.	John Pettersen
	Women	10 lb. 13 oz.	Ashley Brown
Thresher Shark	Men	405 lb. 5 oz.	Sam Jaxtimer
Wahoo*	Men	182 lb. 12 oz.	Derek Wittkamper
Winter Flounder	Men	4 lb. 13 oz.	Rob Thompson
Yellowfin Tuna	Men	91 lb. 13 oz.	Steve Dowler
	Junior	92 lb.	Jack Willis

* New state record

2016 Massachusetts Saltwater Fishing Catch and Release Derby Winners

Species	Length	Angler
Striped Bass	47"	Frank Mazzulli
Winter Flounder	20"	Mark Forrester
False Albacore	28"	Ray Jarvis

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.

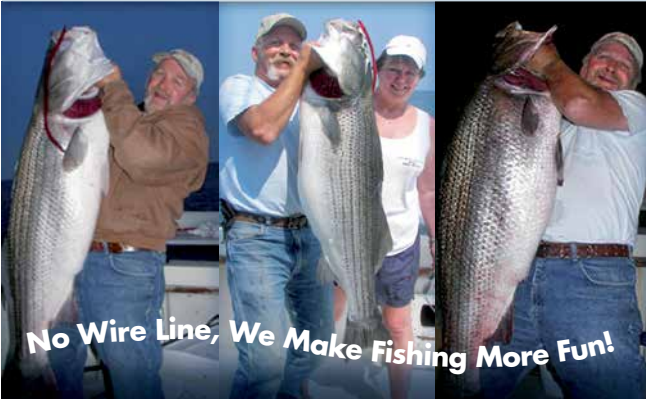
Anglers may submit multiple entries but may earn only one citation per species per year. Only one trophy will be given for the largest of each species per year. Catch and release of any four eligible species by an angler within the year will qualify for a "Grand Slam" release award. Only one "Grand Slam" 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.

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Saltwater Fish Availability 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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R222 ES

\$42,695

R242CC

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R260 CC

\$96,995

R302 CC

\$147,895

R207 DC

\$37,195

R227 DC

\$46,295

R247 DC

\$79,995

R265 WA

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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.

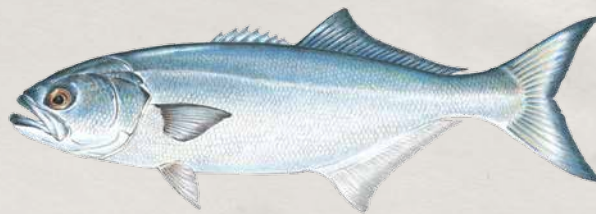
Location: Whole coast surf, inshore bars, reefs, tide-rips, bays, and estuaries.

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 lb.



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 pounds 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.

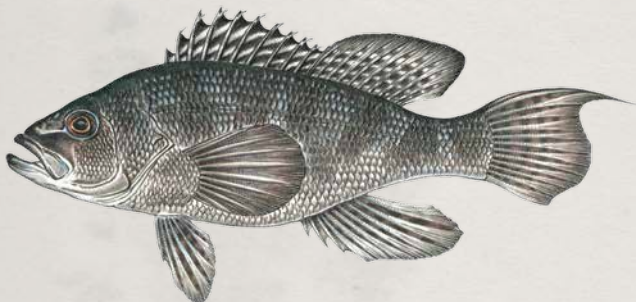
Location: Whole coast surf, inshore bars, tide rips, bays, and estuaries.

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 lb.



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.

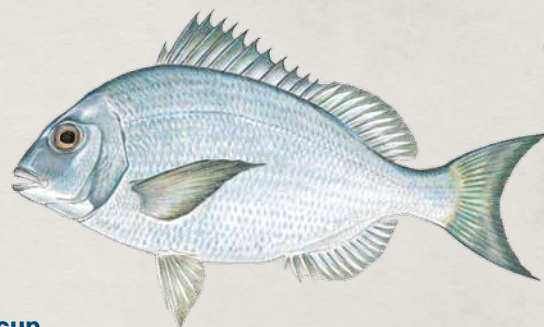
Location: South side of Cape Cod, Buzzards Bay to Rhode Island border and a few are found in Cape Cod Bay. Fish for them around bottom structure such as reefs, rocks, and wrecks.

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 lb.



Scup

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

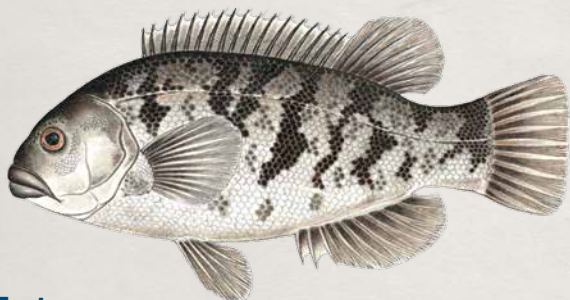
Location: South side of Cape Cod and along coast to Rhode Island

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 lb.



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.

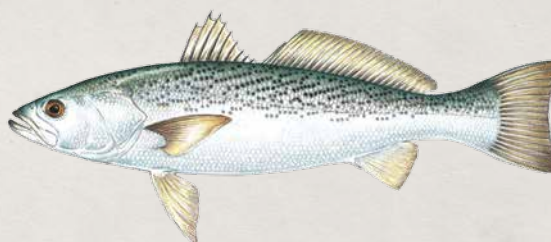
Location: Whole coast, rocky bottoms inshore, bays, harbors, jetties, breakwaters.

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 lb.



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 lb.

Commonly Caught Species



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.

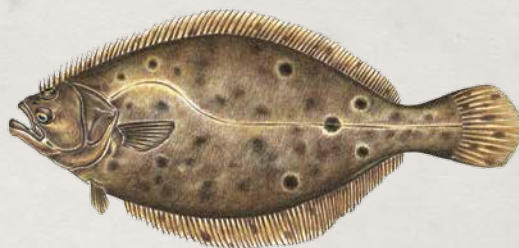
Location: Whole coast, tidal streams, shallow bays, estuaries.

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 lb.



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 lb.



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 lb.



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 lb., bluefin tuna 500 lb.



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.

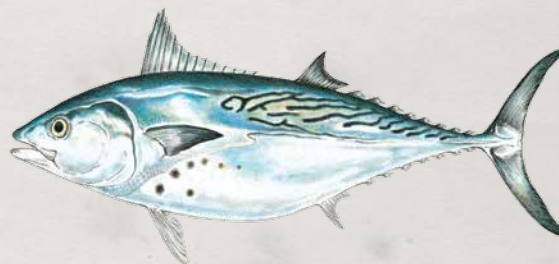
Location: Southern Cape Cod and the Islands, rarely north of Cape Cod.

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 lb.



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 lb.



Cod

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

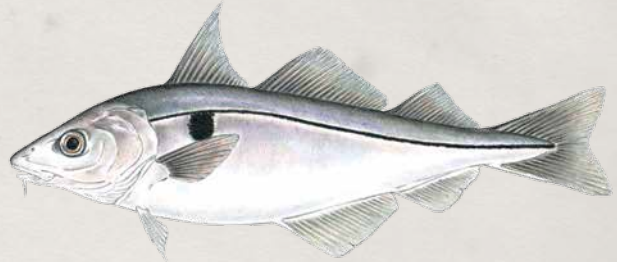
Location: Whole coast, deepwater, inshore while water is cold.

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 lb.



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.

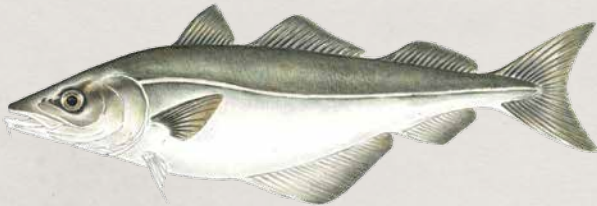
Location: Whole coast, cool waters, prefer depths of 140-450 ft., also prefers shell/sand, smooth rock, or gravel bottom.

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 lb.



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 lb.



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.

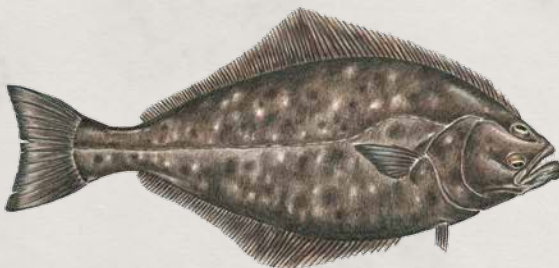
Location: Rocky ledges/hard bottom, moderately deep waters (more than 75 feet).

Season: Year round.

Baits and Lures: Same as cod.

Methods and Tackle: Same as cod.

Mass. Saltwater Fishing Derby Minimum Weight: 20 lb.



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.

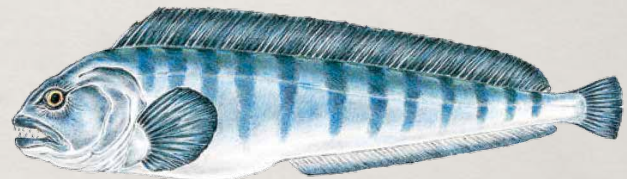
Location: Whole coast, cool and deep waters, preferred bottom type is sand, gravel or clay not soft mud or rock.

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 lb.



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

Commonly Caught Species



Rainbow 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.

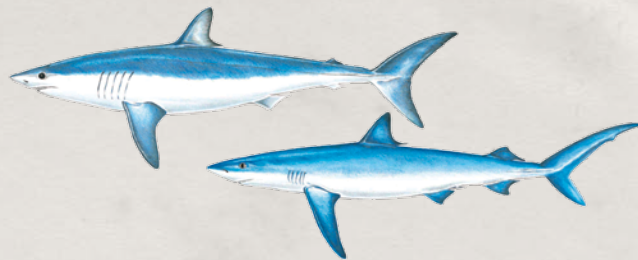
Location: Whole coast, estuaries, the mouths of coastal rivers, and within coastal rivers.

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: Shortfin Mako (top) and Blue (bottom)

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

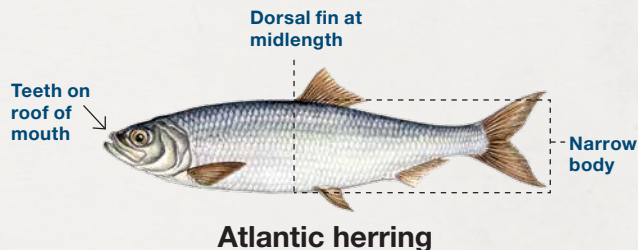
Baits and Lures: Chumming and baited hooks (preferably oily fish)

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

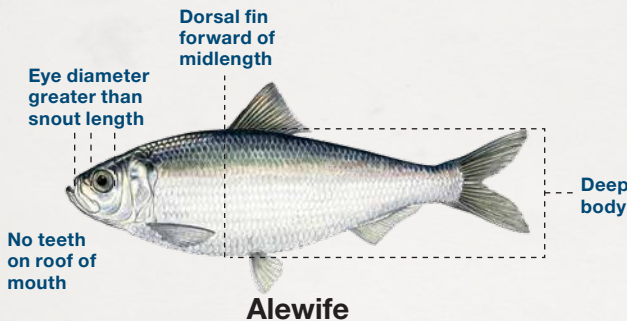
Mass. Saltwater Fishing Derby Minimum Weights: Blue shark 300 lb.; Mako shark 150 lb.

Herring of Massachusetts

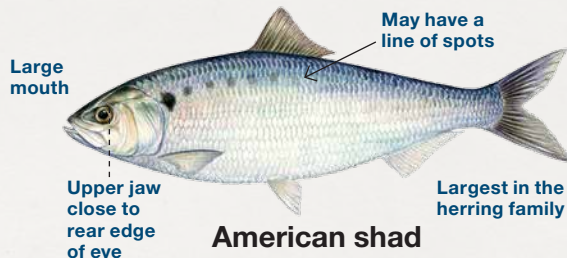
A variety of herring frequent MA coastal and estuarine waters and can be confusing to identify. River herring (alewife and blueback herring) and American shad are generally seen during spring spawning runs. Menhaden and Atlantic herring may appear in our estuaries during coastal migration in the summer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



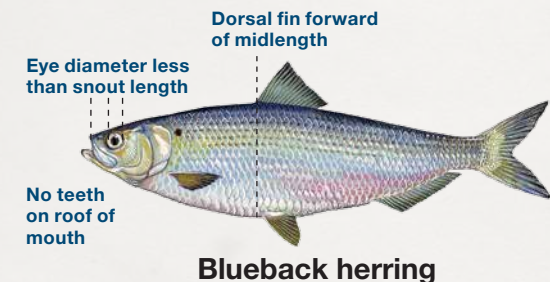
Atlantic herring



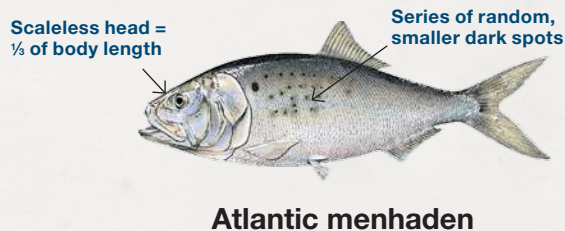
Alewife



American shad



Blueback herring



Atlantic menhaden

Note: The harvest and possession of river herring (alewife and blueback) 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 a shore fishing area. For more information visit the FBA website at: <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dfg/fba/>

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			
Lynn Municipal Ramp,			•	Paved	All
Blossom St.					
<i>DCR Playground</i>			•	Paved	All
Seaport Landing Marina		1			

Location	Jetties	Piers	Ramp	Site Condition	Usable Tide
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
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

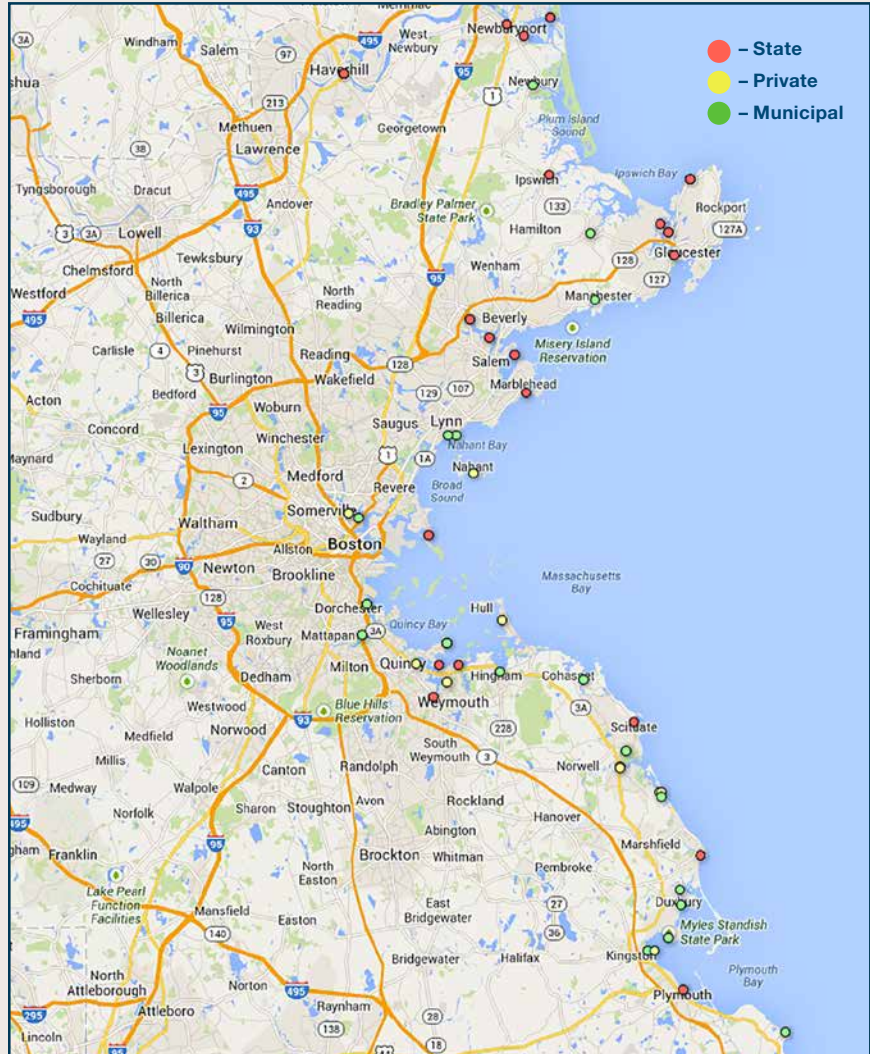
Access Sites

Location	Jetties	Piers	Ramp	Site Condition	Usable Tide
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>Sconticut 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
<i>Broad Cove, Pleasant Street*</i>			•	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 Water Access

Salisbury to Marshfield



Scan this with your mobile device to find access ramps nearest you.



Access Map
Courtesy of Google Maps

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Access Sites

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					
<i>Allens Harbor</i>	1		•	Paved	All
Herring River			•	Paved	All
Round Cove			•	Paved	All
<i>Saquatumet 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

Location	Jetties	Piers	Ramp	Site Condition	Usable Tide
Truro					
<i>Pamet Harbor</i>			•	Paved	All
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,</i>			•	Paved	¾
<i>Edgartown Bay Road</i>					
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
<i>Seaview Ave.</i>		1			
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
 1 Rabbit Hill Road
 Westborough, MA 01581

For more information call: (508) 389-7810



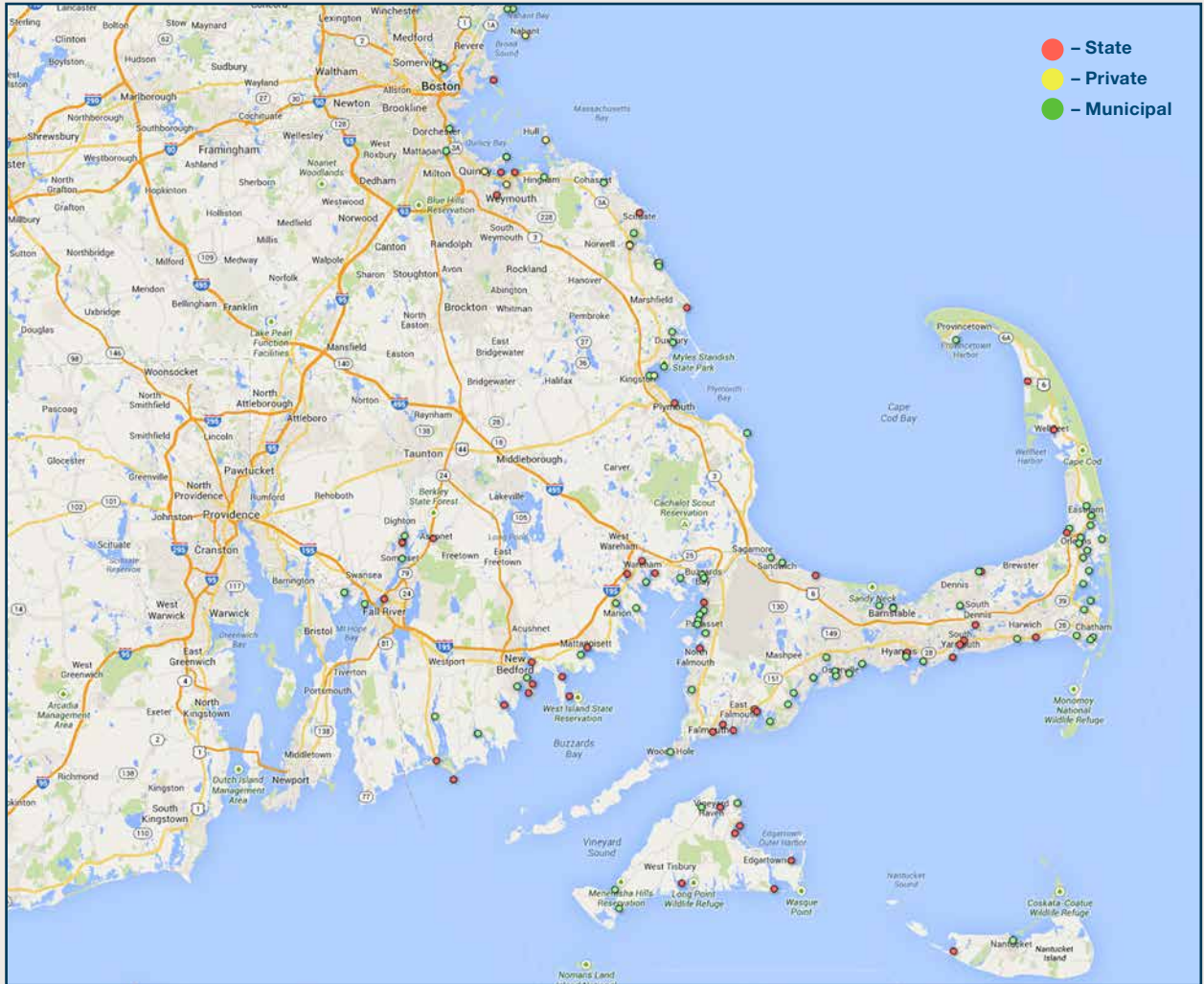
Massachusetts Coastal Water Access

Marshfield to Seekonk

Access Map Courtesy of Google Maps



Scan this with your mobile device to find access ramps nearest you.



Recreational Lobster and Crabbing Permit

What does a recreational lobster and crabbing permit allow me to do?

The permit allows you to fish, retain and land lobsters in Massachusetts. This may be done with traps or by diving. The permit also allows you to fish for, retain and land edible crabs (e.g., blue crabs) by any six-sided trap or other contrivance that is not actively fished. The permit is not needed to fish for, retain or land edible crabs by hand, handline or dipnet, or by any star trap, open collapsible trap or open top trap that is being actively tended to.

Who can get a permit?

Any Massachusetts resident can obtain a permit. Non-residents may also obtain a permit, but they must temporarily reside in any coastal Massachusetts municipality and own more than \$5,000 in real estate in the Commonwealth as determined by tax records. Non-US citizens, whether resident or non-resident, must provide their alien registration card as issued by the US Dept. of Justice Immigration and Naturalization Service.

What does a permit cost and where can I get one?

The permit fees are \$55 for residents and \$75 for non-residents. Permits are available at all DMF offices. Additionally, residents may purchase/renew their permit online at <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dfg/dmf/recreational-fishing/recreational-saltwater-permits.html>.

What is my permit number?

Each permit has a unique identification number that is located on the upper right hand corner of the permit. You are required to mark your traps and dive gear with this permit number (page 33).

May I sell, barter or trade the lobsters and edible crabs that I take under my permit?

No, you may only take lobsters and edible crabs for personal use. You are not allowed to sell, barter or trade any of your recreational lobster and edible crab catch. In order to engage in these activities, you are required, by law, to have a commercial lobster permit.

Does this permit allow me to take lobsters and crabs with traps and lobsters by diving?

Yes, when applying for or renewing your permit you must specify if you wish to fish with traps, diving or both. There are no additional costs for each endorsement.

Do I have to fish in a certain geographical area?

When you apply for your permit, we do ask that you check off a geographical area where you intend to fish. However, you are not limited by this selection and may fish throughout Massachusetts. Note that you may not set buoyed traps in the Cape Cod Canal and the taking of lobsters is prohibited in New Bedford Harbor north of an imaginary line drawn from Ricketson's Point (Dartmouth) to Wilbur Point (Fairhaven). Also, different recreational lobster areas may have different recreational lobster management regulations (page 31).

Who can use this permit?

This depends on whether you are fishing traps or diving. A permit with a trap endorsement allows the permit holder, as well as members of the permit holder's immediate family, to haul your traps. Immediate family includes the spouse, parents, children, grandparents, brothers and sisters. No more than one permit endorsed for trap fishing is allowed per household. A permit with dive endorsement is for the permit holder only and does not cover other persons. Additional permits endorsed for diving must be purchased to cover each diver.

Is reporting required?

Yes, annual catch reports are required of all permit holders. These forms are provided by DMF at the time of renewal. License renewals will not be issued until a catch report has been filed.

Do I need the permit for green crabs?

The permit is not needed to take, retain or land green crabs as they are an inedible invasive species. However, state law requires individuals hold an authorization from DMF in order to harvest green crabs. To obtain this free authorization, please contact Kerry Allard for an LOA or more information at (617) 626-1633 or kerry.allard@state.ma.us.

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...

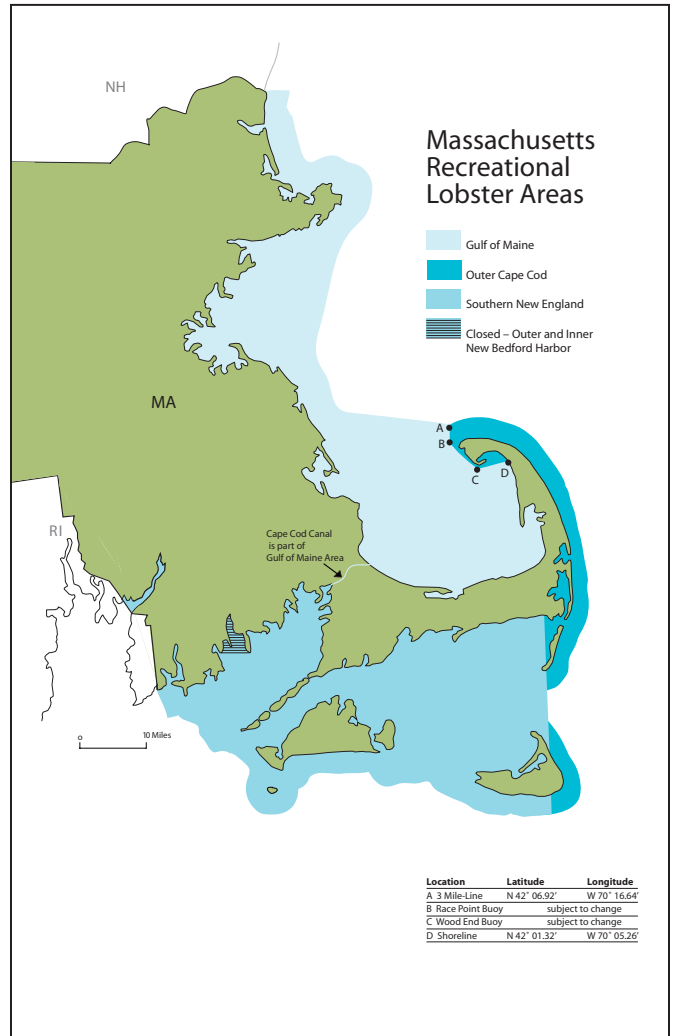
Visit lobstermen.com

Thank you for your continued support!



Recreational Regulations

Recreational Lobster Regulations	
All Areas	
Trap Limit	With trap endorsement, may fish 10 traps per household.
Bag Limit	15 lobsters per day. Lobsters may be stored and retrieved in excess of this limit, provided fishing activity is not occurring.
Night fishing	No trap fishing ½ hour after sunset to ½ hour before sunrise.
Egg Bearing Females	It is unlawful to possess or land any lobster that is egg bearing, from which eggs have been forcibly removed, or that has come in contact with any substance capable of removing eggs.
V-Notch	It is unlawful to possess or land any female lobster that bears a v-shaped notch or indentation on the base of the tail flipper to the right of the center flipper that is ⅛" or deeper with or without setal hairs.
Prohibited Gears	It is unlawful to possess or land any lobster taken by spear gun, pole spear, or other device that pierces the shell as means of harvest; by dipping or dipnet; by star trap or any trap that is fished in an open configuration until retrieved; by dragging or the use of any hauled nets or dredges; or snaring and poles with loops.
Gulf of Maine Recreational Lobster Area	
Minimum Size	3¼"
Maximum Size	5"
Escape Vent	One rectangular vent 1⅝" x 5¾" or two circular vents of 2⅞" in diameter
Outer Cape Cod Recreational Lobster Area	
Minimum Size	3⅝"
Maximum Size	—
Escape Vent	One rectangular vent 2" x 5¼" or two circular vents of 2⅝" in diameter
Southern New England Recreational Lobster Area	
Minimum Size	3⅝"
Maximum Size	5¼"
Escape Vent	One rectangular vent 2" x 5¾" or two circular vents of 2⅞" in diameter



Recreational Crab Regulations					
	Minimum Size	Possession Limit	Closed Season	Egg Bearing	Night Fishing
Blue Crabs	5" shell width	25 crabs	January 1 – April 30	Prohibited	No tending or hauling traps ½ hour after sunset to ½ hour before sunrise. Use of non-trap gears is allowed at night.
Other Edible Crabs (not including green crabs)	No size requirement	50 edible crabs combined and not to exceed 25 blue crabs.	January 1 – April 30	Prohibited	No tending or hauling traps ½ hour after sunset to ½ hour before sunrise. Use of non-trap gears is allowed at night.

Crab Identification



How to Measure a Lobster

The Rules

Lobsters must be measured with a special gauge to make sure that they are *keepers*. 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 body shell. Make sure the gauge is at the extreme rear of the eye socket below the rostrum or horn. A common error is to measure from the horn located forward of the eye socket, which results in an improper measurement.

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.



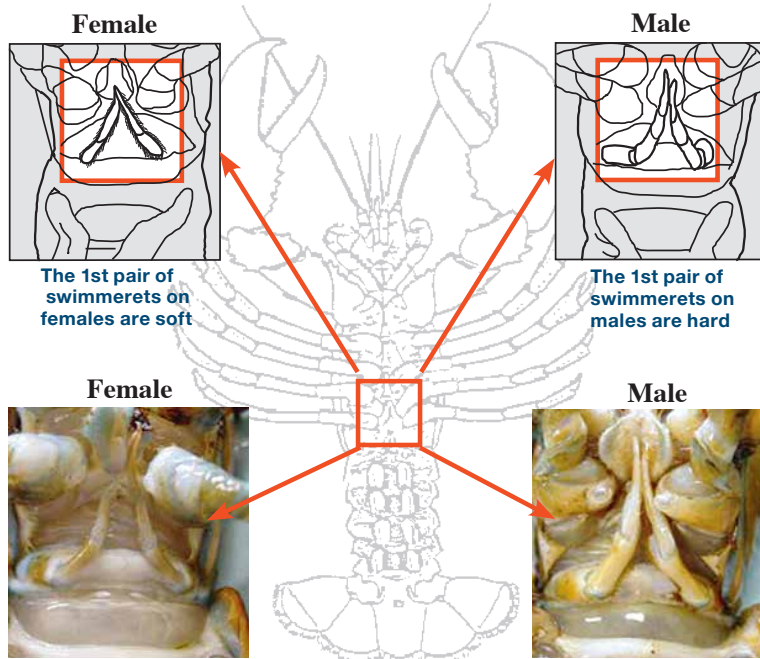
Correct lobster measurement



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.



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 lb. (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 1,000 and >100,000 eggs depending on the size of the female.

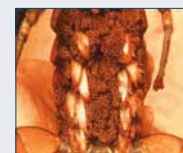
Hatching typically occurs over a 4 month period from May through September. In Massachusetts we typically see peak hatching from late-June through early-July.

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 forcibly 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 to reddish 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 female's flipper after she has hatched her eggs which protects her from harvest through additional molts. If you choose to voluntarily v-notch egg-bearing female lobsters, we strongly encourage you to purchase a v-notching tool; this tool is available at marine supply stores.

V-Notching History

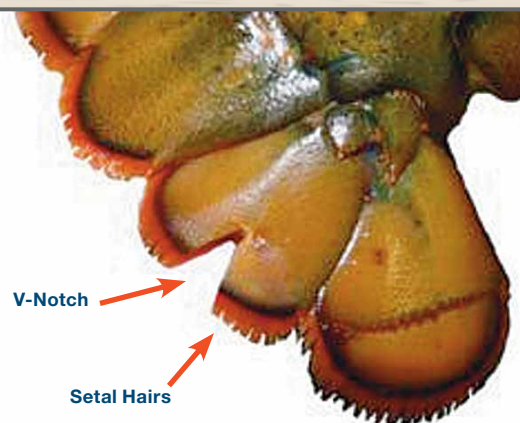
The practice of v-notching, as a means of protecting local broodstock, originated in Maine and dates back to the early 1900s.

Which Flipper is Notched?

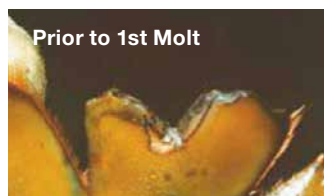
The tail flipper immediately to the right of the middle flipper, when the lobster is examined with the underside of the lobster down and its tail is toward the person making the determination.

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 and Edible Crabbing



Permitting

To recreationally dive for lobsters in Massachusetts, all divers must hold a Recreational Lobster/Crabbing Permit endorsed for diving. A permit endorsed for diving only covers the individual and does not cover the immediate family. Each individual diver must hold their own permit endorsed for diving. This permit must be carried on the vessel at all times when fishing for lobsters. No permit is required for the taking of edible crabs by diving. The taking of edible crabs is subject to recreational crab regulations (page 31).

Gear and Marking Requirements

Dive Flag - MA law requires each diver or group of divers, while swimming or below the surface, to display a dive flag. The dive flag must be at least 12" x 15" in area with a red background and white diagonal stripe. The flag must be displayed on the vessel or on a surface float and must extend at least 3 feet from the surface of the water. Divers are required to stay within 100 feet of the displayed flag while at or near the surface. Divers may display their permit numbers of their dive flag.

Dive Marker - If the permit number for all divers is not displayed on the dive flag, a dive marker must be used. The dive marker must be a 12" x 12" floating panel with a white background. The permit number for each diver must be displayed on each side of the marker in numerals measuring 3" in height by 1/2" in width. **Dive Tank** - The permit number must be marked on your dive tank in numerals that measure 3" in height by 1/2" in width.

Methods of Taking Lobsters

Divers may take lobsters by hand. They may also utilize a *tickle stick*, which is a straight or slightly bent stick used to agitate a lobster to come out of its hole. The use of spears, snares and dipnets is prohibited (page 31).

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 (e.g., blue and Jonah)** per day.

All About Gear

Permit Requirements

To recreationally fish for lobsters and crabs with traps you must hold a Recreational Lobster/Crabbing Permit endorsed for trap fishing. This endorsement allows you to fish up to 10 traps. Any member of your immediate family may fish your traps for you. No household may hold more than one permit endorsed for traps, nor fish more than 10 traps. This permit must be carried on the vessel at all times when fishing for lobsters or edible crabs. This permit allows up to 15 lobsters to be kept per day.

Surface Identification

Buoy Colors

All traps and cars must be buoyed at the surface. Each permit holder must have a unique buoy color combination of up to three colors. This color combination is provided by the applicant on the application. Each buoy must be marked with this color scheme, typically by painting the buoys. The color scheme must also be visibly displayed on the vessel. This is commonly done by displaying a buoy on the vessel or painting the color scheme on the side of the vessel. You should look to see what combinations recreational and commercial trap fishermen are using in your area and try to pick a unique color combination.

Buoy Marking

All buoys must be permanently marked with permit holder information in a specific

alphanumeric sequence. This begins with the letter "N"; then the permit number; followed by a dash (-); then a single digit from 0 to 9, indicating the sequential pot number in the series that the permit holder is fishing. Each letter and number must be 1" in height by ½" in width. Common techniques include permanent marker, painting or burning.

Single Pots vs Trawls

Most recreational fishermen prefer to fish single buoyed pots rather than trawls, which are a series of pots tied together at one or both ends. However, they may fish either. Each style of trap configuration requires a unique surface identification.

Single traps shall be marked with a single 7" x 7" or 5" x 11" buoy. The use of buoy sticks is optional, but if a stick is used a flag shall not be attached.

Trawls shall be marked on the east end 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). Then the west end of the trawl shall be marked with a single 7" x 7" or 5" x 11" buoy with a 3 foot stick and flag. Trawls of two or three traps shall only be marked on one end, whereas trawls of four or more traps must be marked on both.

Gear Identification

All traps and cars must be permanently marked with permit holder information in the same alphanumeric sequence as the buoy number. This alphanumeric sequence shall be permanently secured into the inside of the trap through the use of a synthetic plate or by being burned or cut by a wooden lath.



Lobster/Crab Trap Requirements

Maximum Size

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

Escape Vents

Escape vents are required in order to allow sub-legal sized lobsters and other non-targeted species to leave the trap. Escape vents must be unobstructed. Circular vents are preferred for retaining crabs.

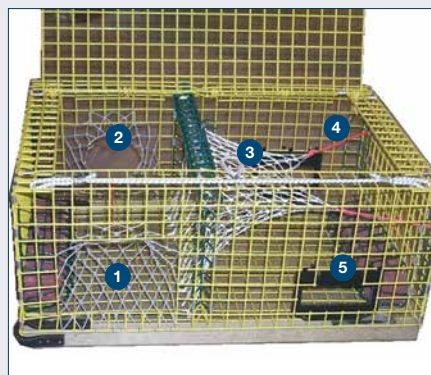
One or more rectangular escape vent or two or more circular escape vents shall be placed on a side of the parlor section of the trap and are typically affixed with hog rings. While a particular orientation is not mandated, certain orientations enhance escapement (see Escape Vent and Ghost Panel Placement). If your trap has two parlors, both areas must be vented.

Escape vent sizes and frequency are specific to the Recreational Lobster/Crab Area (p 30) where the traps are set and hauled:

- **Gulf of Maine Recreational Lobster/Crab Area.** Rectangular escape vents must measure at least 1 1/8" by 5 3/4" or two circular vents must measure 2 7/8" diameter.
- **Outer Cape Cod or Southern New England Recreational Lobster/Crab Area.** Rectangular escape vents must measure 2" by 5 3/4" or two circular vents must measure at least 2 5/8" diameter.

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.



Ghost Panels

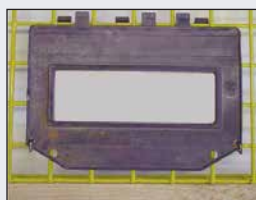
Ghost panels are designed to create an opening to allow the escapement of lobsters and incidental catch within 12 months after a trap has been lost or abandoned.

- **Panel size.** The panel must be rectangular and measure at least 3 3/4" x 3 3/4". The panel may be your escape vent or trap door.
- **Panel location.** The panel must be located in the outer parlor section of the trap and in a position which allows unobstructed exit of lobsters. The panel should not be located on the bottom of the trap.

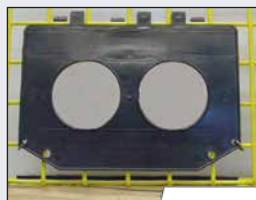
- **Panel fasteners.** The panel - or the trap door or escape vent if being used as a panel - must be fastened to the trap with one of the following materials: cotton; hemp; sisal or jute twine not greater than 3/16" diameter; or non-stainless, uncoated ferrous metal not greater than 3/32" in diameter.
- **Wooden traps.** Traps constructed entirely or partially of wood shall be considered in compliance if constructed with wooden lath to the extent that deterioration of the wooden component(s) will result in an unobstructed opening of at least 3 3/32" by 3 3/32".

Escape Vent and Ghost Panel Placement

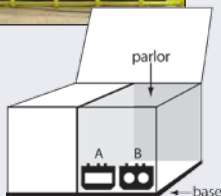
• **Note:** These examples are meant to be used as suggestions for escape vent and ghost panel placement in lobster traps. It is NOT required that escape vents and ghost panels be positioned in any way, except to provide an "unobstructed" means for escape by sub-legal lobsters.



A



B



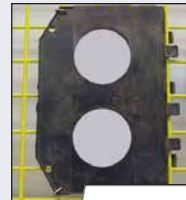
More Effective Placement In Allowing Escapement of Sublegal Lobsters



C



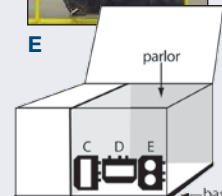
D



E

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.



Line Configuration Requirements

Your buoy lines are the lines that connect your pots to their surface buoy. While swimming through the water column large whales, porpoises and sea turtles may become entangled in these lines. As Massachusetts provides important waters for these species, your buoy lines are subject to certain requirements to reduce injury and mortality associated with entanglements and to identify entangling gear.

Sinking Buoy Lines

The top 2/3 of all buoy lines must be comprised of sinking line. The bottom 1/3 of the line which may be floating line, if so desired. Sinking line has a specific gravity that is greater than or equal to that of seawater (1.03) and does not float in the water column.

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.



Buoy Line Diameter

All buoy lines must have a diameter that does not exceed 3/8".

Weak Links

On the top of the buoy line before the buoy, all lines must have a breakable section (weak link) that will part when subjected to 600 pounds of pull pressure and after parting will result in a knot-less end, not ticker than the diameter of the line (see image).

Weak Links

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

Swivel Weak Links



Buoy Line Marking

Mid-way on the buoy line there must be a 4" red mark. If the buoy line is red, then a white mark may be used instead. Common marking tools include tape and paint (see image).

Ground Line

If fishing trawls, the groundline that connects each pot must be sinking line (see image).



Images: NOAA Fisheries Service

Hog Ring Weak Link

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Whale Gear Restrictions and Closures

Abandoned Gear

All traps must be hauled at least once every 30 days, or the gear is considered to be abandoned. It is unlawful to abandon gear in Massachusetts waters. If you believe your gear is lost and may become abandoned, please contact the Massachusetts Environmental Police or the Division of Marine Fisheries and inform them of when and where the gear was last hauled and set.

Single Traps Closure

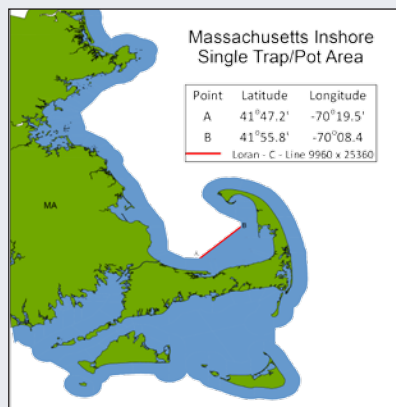
The use of single traps is prohibited in state-waters north of Cape Cod that are seaward of 3-miles from shore, with an exception for an area off Billingsgate Shoal. This area includes those waters that are shoreward of the Loran-C Line 9960-X-25360, as it runs from Barnstable to Wellfleet (see map for coordinates).

Trap Gear Haul Out Period

All traps must be removed from and may not be set in the Large Whale Seasonal Trap Gear Closure Area from February 1 through April 30 (see map for coordinates).

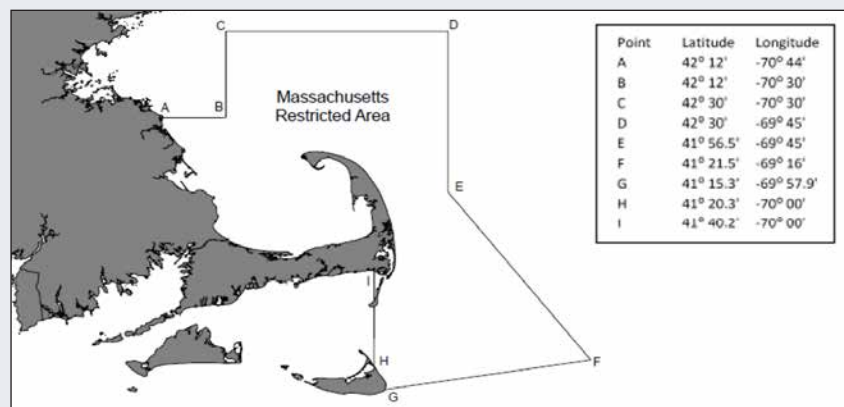
Single Trap Area

Single traps may be set in the shaded areas depicted in the map below.



Large Whale Seasonal Trap/Pot Gear Closure Area

From February 1 – April 30, traps must be removed from and not be set in the area defined in the map below.



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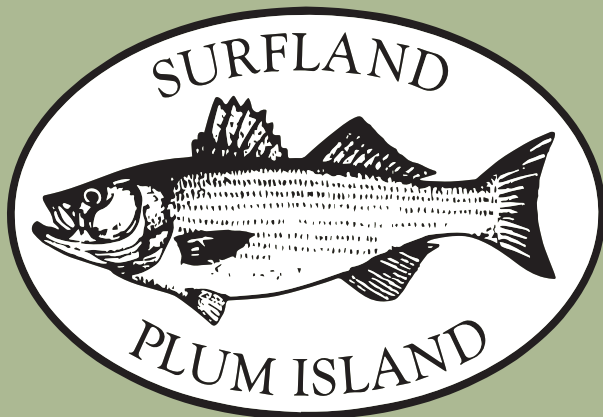
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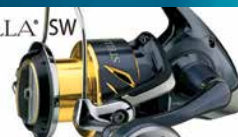
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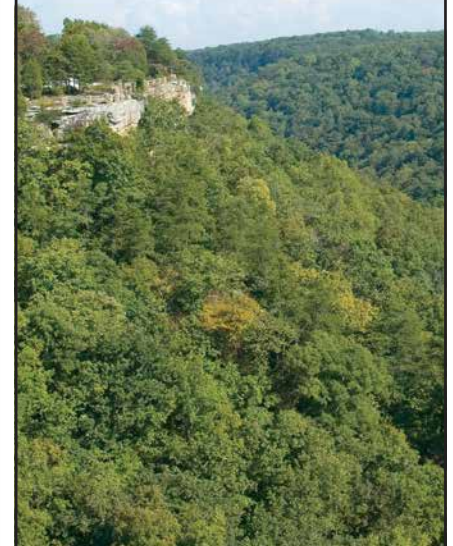
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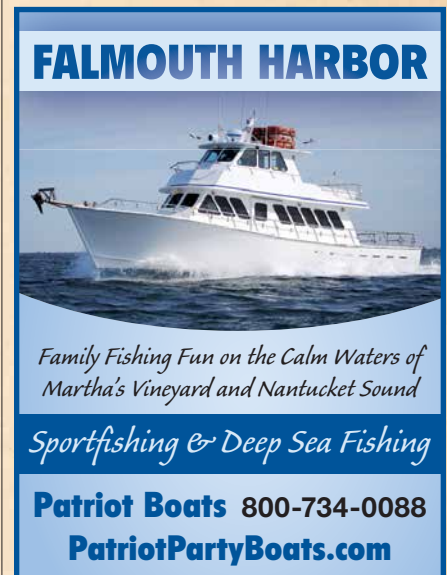
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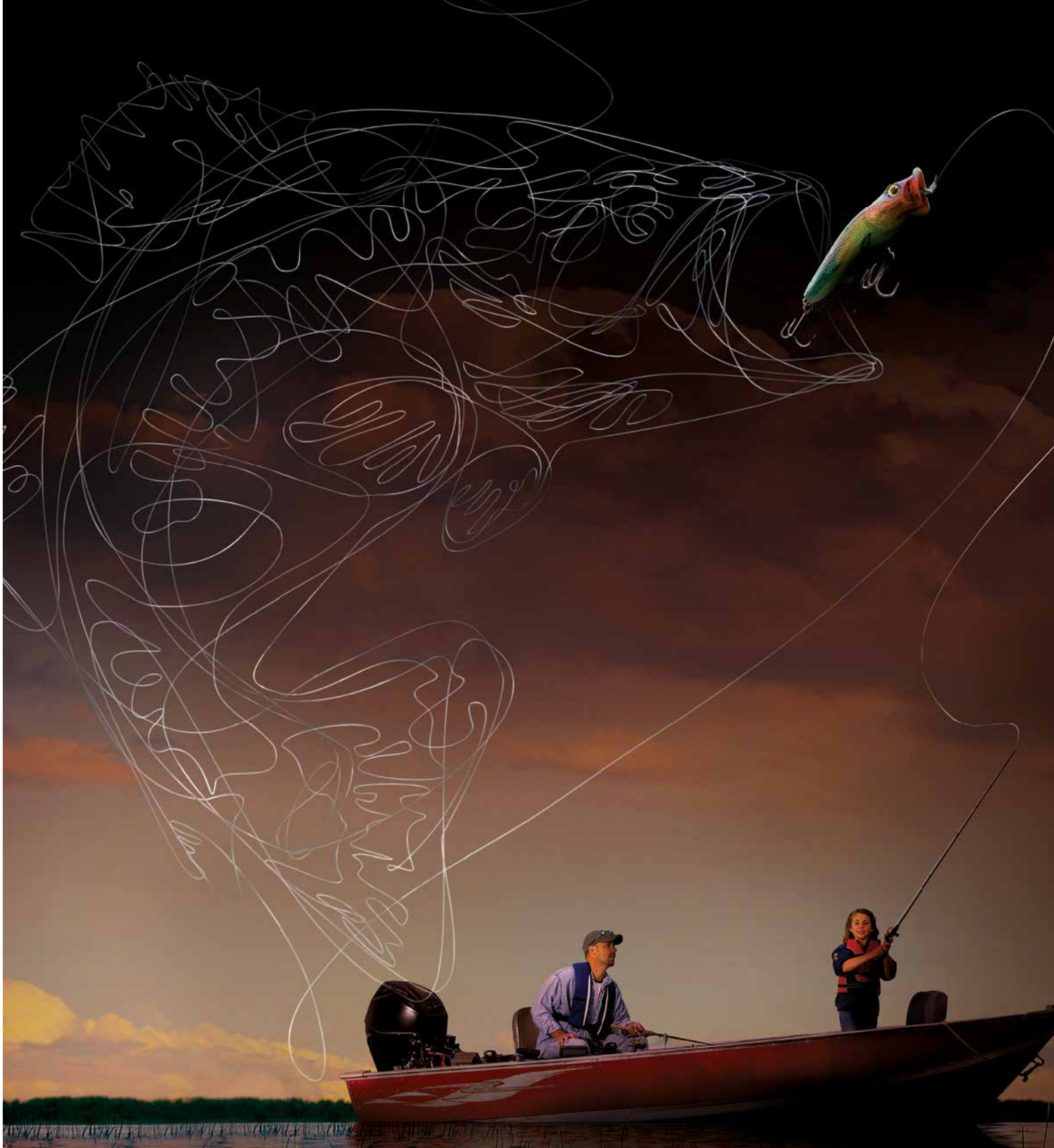
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