

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **THE MASSACHUSETTS COASTAL ZONE BOUNDARY**

Under the provisions of the federal Coastal Zone Management Act, CZM's coastal policies apply to any federal activity that may reasonably be expected to affect the land or water resources or uses of the Massachusetts coastal zone. The description below specifies the geographic extent of that provision of the CZMA, as it applies to Massachusetts coastal resources.

The coastal zone of Massachusetts includes the lands and waters within an area defined by the seaward limit of the state's territorial sea (generally 3 miles from shore), extending from the Massachusetts/New Hampshire border south to the Massachusetts/Rhode Island border, and landward to 100 feet inland of specified major roads, rail lines, or other visible rights-of-way. The coastal zone includes all of Cape Cod, Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket.

The Massachusetts coastal zone includes islands, transitional and intertidal areas, coastal wetlands and beaches. Tidal rivers and adjacent uplands are included, at a minimum, to the extent of vegetation affected by saline water. Anadromous fish runs are included to the fresh water breeding area, if the area is within a coastal town. Also included are areas 100 feet inland of the 100-year floodplain along tidal rivers and fish runs. Land owned or controlled by the federal government is excluded by law from the coastal zone, though the off-site impacts of federal projects on federal lands are within the jurisdiction of CZM.

Human activities outside the immediate coastal zone may affect the land or water resources or uses of the coastal zone. Projects proposed in Massachusetts' coastal watersheds, adjacent states, or offshore waters may affect the resources of the Massachusetts coastal zone. The 1990 Reauthorization of the Coastal Zone Management Act extended the authority of coastal zone management programs to any federal activity "within or outside the coastal zone that affects any land or water use or natural resource of the coastal zone...". As such, CZM's interests extend to adjacent marine waters (off-shore federal waters), adjacent state waters (New Hampshire and Rhode Island), and Massachusetts coastal watersheds.

The map on the following page is a general depiction of the CZM boundary and of state waters. More detailed maps of the Massachusetts coastal zone can be found in the CZM Coastal Atlas, available at all CZM offices and in public libraries in coastal towns, or at [www.mass.gov/mgis/cstzone.htm](http://www.mass.gov/mgis/cstzone.htm). A general map of Massachusetts coastal watersheds is included in Appendix F.

**MASSACHUSETTS COASTAL ZONE**

