



David E. Pierce, PhD.
Director

Commonwealth of Massachusetts

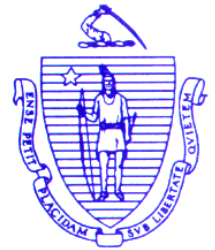
Division of Marine Fisheries

251 Causeway Street, Suite 400

Boston, Massachusetts 02114

(617) 626-1520

fax (617) 626-1509



Charles D. Baker
Governor

Karyn E. Polito
Lieutenant Governor

Matthew A. Beaton
Secretary

Ronald S. Amidon
Commissioner

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Deputy Commissioner

January 2, 2018

Marine Fisheries Advisory

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD:

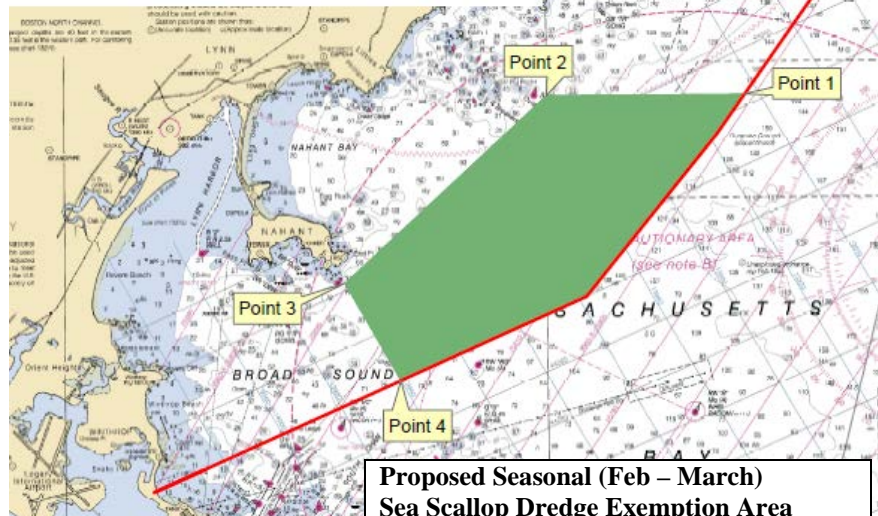
REQUESTED PILOT PROGRAM TO ALLOW WINTERTIME SEA SCALLOP DREDGING WITHIN THE NORTH SHORE YEAR-ROUND CLOSURE AREA NORTH OF BOSTON

With limited exceptions, all waters under the jurisdiction of the Commonwealth north of Boston are closed to mobile gear fishing year-round [322 CMR 4.06(2)]. The Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) has received and reviewed a request to establish a pilot program that would exempt the use of sea scallop dredge gear in an area of these closed waters during the winter months.

For 2018 the exempted fishery is proposed to occur during the months of February and March. The proposed exempted area (see map) would run from the intersection of the seaward North Shore Mobile Gear Closure boundary and 42° 27.61' longitude (Point 1); then due west along the parallel to the 70° 50' meridian just east of the Pig Rocks buoy (Point 2); then in a straight line in a southwesterly direction to where it intersects with the LORAN-C 9960-Y-44270 line, just south east of the Shag Rocks Buoy (Point 3); then along LORAN-C 9960-Y-44270 in a southeasterly direction to where it intersects with the mobile gear closure boundary (Point 4).

Proposed Seasonal (February – March) Sea Scallop Dredge Exemption Area

Year Round North Shore Mobile Gear Closure Area
Proposed Feb – March Sea Scallop Dredge Exemption Area



Proposed Seasonal (Feb – March) Sea Scallop Dredge Exemption Area

| Points | Latitude (Deg Dec Min) | Longitude (Deg Dec Min) |
|--------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | 42° 27.61' | -70° 45.866' |
| 2 | 42° 27.61' | -70° 50.000' |
| 3 | 42° 24.632' | -70° 54.128' |
| 4 | 42° 23.233' | -70° 53.063' |

At this time DMF is requesting public comment on this requested exempted fishery. Public comment should be limited to the implementation of such an exempted fishing area, as well as any

potential gear modifications or other restrictions that may be suitable to accompany such an exempted fishery.

Instructions for Public Comment on the Pilot Program

DMF will accept public comment on this potential pilot program through Sunday, January 21, 2018. Any comment received during this period will be reviewed by the Director prior to making any final decision regarding the implementation of this pilot program for 2018. Please address all comments to Director Pierce at marine.fish@state.ma.us or 251 Causeway Street, Suite 400, Boston, MA 02114.

For more information about the management of the sea scallop dredge fishery in Massachusetts, contact DMF at 617-626-1520 or visit our website at www.mass.gov/marinefisheries.