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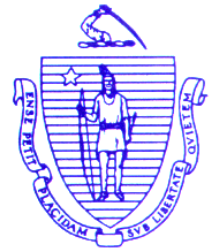
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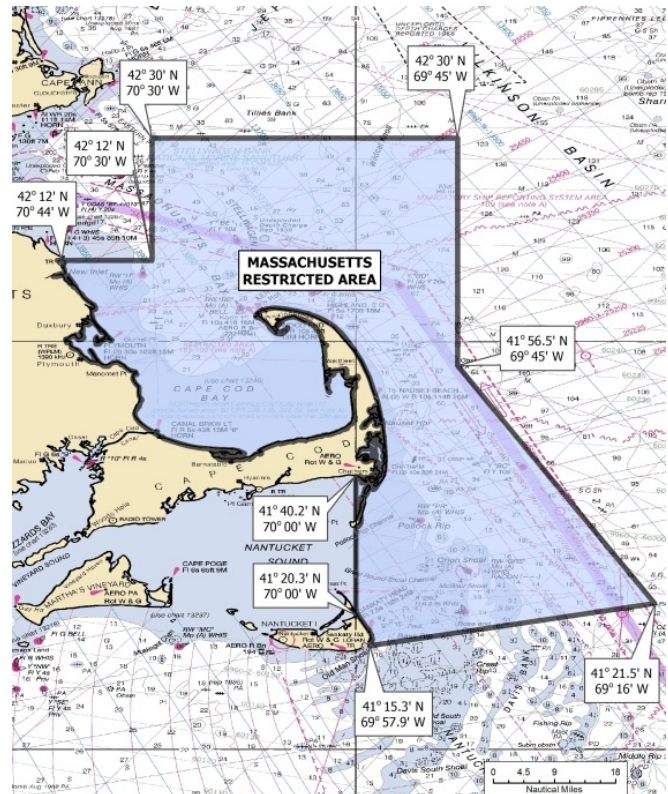
January 2, 2018

Marine Fisheries Advisory

NOTIFICATION TO COMMERCIAL AND RECREATIONAL TRAP FISHERMEN MASSACHUSETTS LARGE WHALE SEASONAL TRAP GEAR CLOSURE IN EFFECT FROM FEBRUARY 1 – APRIL 30

The annual Massachusetts Large Whale Seasonal Trap Gear Closure Area (Seasonal Closure) will be in effect from February 1 to April 30. During this period, all pot and trap gear must be removed from the waters within Seasonal Closure. This applies to all commercial pot and trap gear fishermen regardless of whether they are state or federally permitted, as well as all recreational lobster and crab fishermen. The coordinates of the Seasonal Closure are depicted in the map to the right.

DMF will be working with the Massachusetts Environmental Police to patrol the seasonal closure and remove all pot and trap gear. Patrols of the closure area will be conducted over the next several weeks. If gear is found in the area, fishermen will be notified of the location of their gear so they can retrieve it prior to the closure going into effect. Once the closure is in effect, it will be strictly enforced. Fishermen who fail to remove their trap gear from the Seasonal Closure may face federal or state fines, as well as potential action against their permit. With some of the smaller ports becoming iced in, some fishermen have brought their vessels to larger ports and have enlisted the assistance of fishermen from larger ports to assist in retrieving their gear. DMF encourages fishermen to work cooperatively to remove all gear from this closure area.



During the late winter and early spring, a large proportion of the known northern right whale population migrates through the waters east of Cape Cod into Cape Cod Bay where they aggregate to feed on high densities of zooplankton before continuing their annual migration northward. Accordingly, the purpose of the closure is to reduce the risk of this large population of endangered northern right whales from becoming entangled with buoy lines affixed to trap gear and to minimize the risk of serious injury or mortality.

For more information about the Seasonal Closure please visit our website
(www.mass.gov/marinefisheries) or view the federal [Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan](#).