



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Division of Marine Fisheries

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Expansion of Seasonal Gillnet Closure to Protect Right Whales

DMF has expanded the spatial extent of the January 1 – May 15 seasonal sink gillnet closure to protect right whales. Whereas this closure previously only applied in Cape Cod Bay, it now applies throughout all Massachusetts state waters. This extended closure is effective for this calendar year.

This closure is designed to mitigate the risk of a right whale becoming entangled in this fixed gear when they seasonally aggregate in and migrate through our waters. Of particular concern was the potential co-occurrence of gillnet gear and right whales in Massachusetts Bay and off Cape Ann during April and early May. In recent years, right whale sightings data show right whales are increasingly using these waters during this time.

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