



# The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

## Division of Marine Fisheries

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### **New Buoy Line Marking Rules for Commercial Trap Gear Fishermen**

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During the summer of 2021, DMF adopted new state buoy line marking rules for commercial lobster trap fishermen and these rules went into effect on February 1, 2022. More recently, DMF modified these regulations to have the state buoy line marking requirements apply to all commercial trap fisheries—including not just the commercial lobster trap fishery but also the scup pot, black sea bass pot, and whelk pot fisheries. These modifications will go into effect on February 18, 2022. A comprehensive overview of the buoy line marking requirements for 2022 may be found on DMF's [website](#).

These new buoy line marking requirements establish a distinct marking scheme for Massachusetts' state waters commercial trap fisheries which distinguishes it from other jurisdictions. This is a critical component of Massachusetts protected species management program to ensure any entanglement is properly attributed to the jurisdiction where the gear was set. DMF amended its state regulations in coordination with NOAA Fisheries' adjusting the buoy line marking requirements in the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan. The corresponding federal buoy line marking rules affect just the Northeast Lobster and Jonah Crab/Pot trap fishery and go into effect on May 1, 2022. Changes to federal buoy line marking rules for fish pot or gillnet fisheries are not expected until 2023.

For more resources on DMF's protected species regulations affecting buoy line marking and buoy line modifications, please visit DMF's conservation solutions [website](#).