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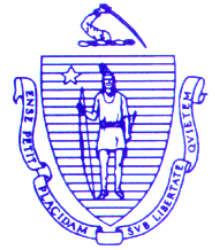
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Marine Fisheries Advisory

DMF to Temporarily Lift the Massachusetts Bay Commercial Groundfish Closure for April 2020

For 2020, DMF is taking action to temporarily lift the April commercial groundfish closure in the Massachusetts Bay portion of state-waters between 42°00' N (Plymouth) and 42°30' N (Marblehead) that are west of 70°30' W ([see map](#)). This action is being implemented pursuant to the Director's declaratory authority ([Legal Notice](#)) and was approved by the Massachusetts Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission at their February 20, 2020 business meeting.

DMF intends to sample commercial state-waters groundfish trips during this April opening. DMF's Fisheries Dependent Research Program will be reaching out to active fishermen. These fishermen are reminded that they are required to accommodate state sea samplers.

DMF established this conditional commercial groundfish closure for April in Massachusetts Bay in 2019. The closure was designed to ensure the state-waters fishery does not exceed annual federally allocated state-waters subcomponents for regulated groundfish stocks and compromise federal conservation objectives. Accordingly, the closure is conditional and the regulation allows DMF to lift the closure on an annual basis if it concludes that allowing commercial groundfish fishing in the area will not compromise these stated objectives. For the current fishing year (May 1, 2019 – April 30, 2020), DMF's [analysis](#) indicated that the closure could be lifted. A similar analysis was conducted last year resulting in the closure being lifted also being lifted for April 2019.

This action does not impact existing spawning closures or gear type closures in these state-waters or in adjacent state-waters in the Gulf of Maine. These spawning and gear type closures will remain in effect and will continue to restrict groundfish fishing in certain areas. These closures include the February 1 – May 31 [winter flounder spawning closure](#) throughout the inshore waters north of Cape Cod, the April 16 – July 21 [spring cod spawning conservation zone](#) off Marblehead, the February 1 – May 15 [Critical Habitat gillnet closure](#) in Cape Cod Bay, and the mobile gear closures off [Boston](#) and the [North Shore](#). DMF has published maps on its [website](#) depicting how these various closures interact and where groundfish fishing may occur during April based on gear type.

For more information regarding the management of marine fisheries in the Commonwealth please visit our website: www.mass.gov/marinefisheries