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Marine Fisheries Advisory

Harwich Recreational Fishing Reef Construction and New Rules that Make the Site Recreational Fishing Only

The Division of Marine Fisheries has commenced the construction of a reef off Harwich, MA. It is expected that the construction will conclude by April 1st. When completed, the reef will form a square-shaped site measuring 9.9 acres (200 meters on all sides) situated in about 30 feet of water approximately 2 miles south of Saquatucket Harbor on the sandy bottom of Nantucket Sound. Reef materials include concrete made available through the demolition of the old Harwich High School. This reef project was funded through revenues from the Massachusetts Recreational Saltwater License and with approval by the Marine Recreational Development Panel.

The corner point coordinates of the reef site are as follows:

Harwich Reef Site Coordinates

Site	Latitude in Decimal Degrees	Longitude in Decimal Degrees
Northwest Corner	41.62671	-70.071379
Northeast Corner	41.62671	-70.068988
Southeast Corner	41.624911	-70.068988
Southwest Corner	41.624911	-70.071379

In building this reef, material is being deposited on the ocean floor. Finfish and invertebrate species that prefer structured habitats and benthic relief are expected to utilize this reef, including popular recreational species such as black sea bass, striped bass, scup and tautog. By providing habitat for these species and attracting these finfish to this location, local near-shore fishing will be enhanced for the benefit of the state's recreational fishermen.

Concurrent with the construction of this reef site, DMF has filed emergency regulations to prohibit commercial fishing in the reef site and within a buffer zone that extends 100 meters in all directions from the perimeter of the reef site. The result is a 39.54 acre closed square-shaped area measuring 400 meters on each side. The prohibition on commercial fishing in this closed area includes the setting of fixed or mobile gear, or rod and reel fishing while in possession of quantities of fish that exceed the state's recreational fishing limits.

This prohibition is intended to eliminate user group and gear conflicts on and immediately adjacent to the reef site. For instance, if fish pot fishing were to proliferate around the reef, the buoy lines would likely become entangled in hook and line gear or in boat propellers. These types of potential conflicts threaten to erode the benefits of this reef to the recreational fishing public.

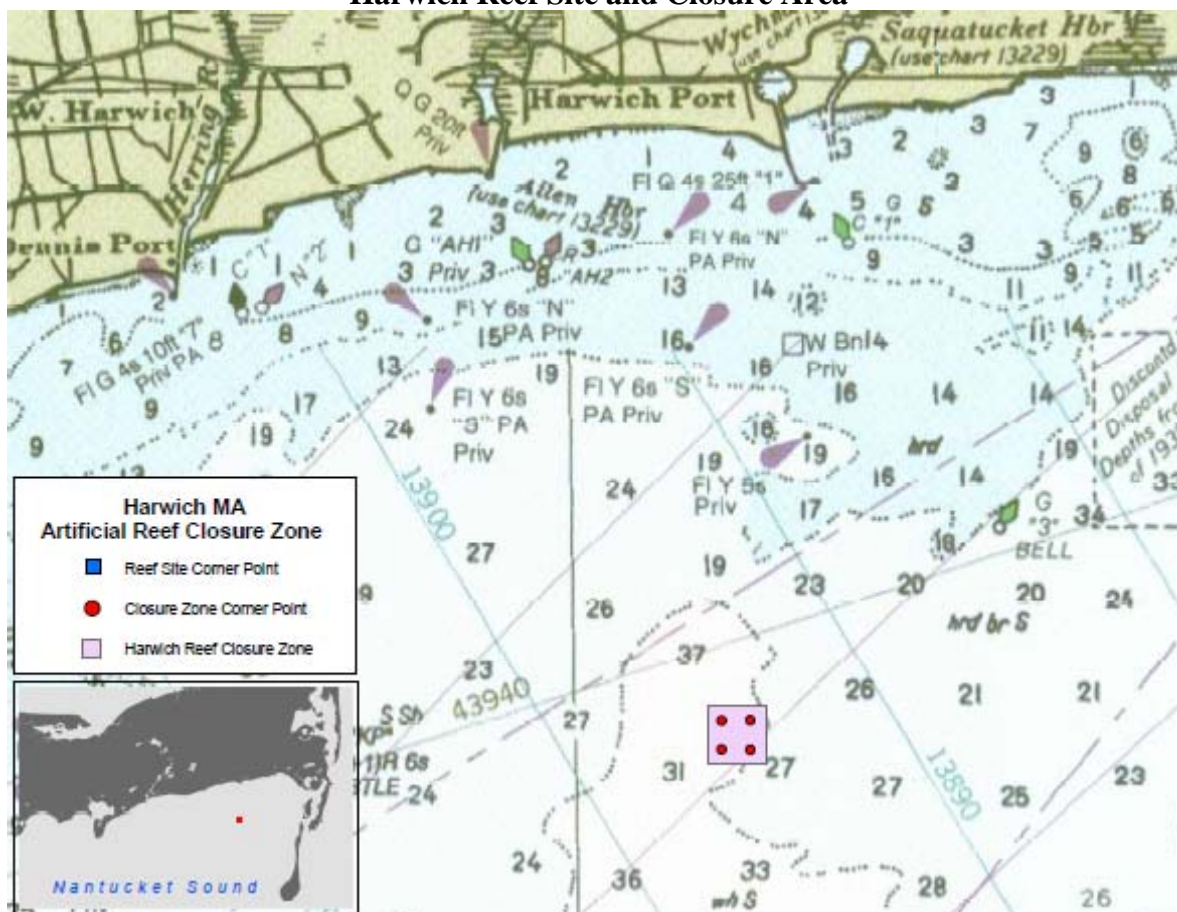
The corner-point coordinates for the commercial fishing closure are as follows:

Harwich Reef Commercial Fishing Closure

Site	Latitude in Decimal Degrees	Longitude in Decimal Degrees
Northwest Corner	41.62755	-70.07251
Northeast Corner	41.62755	-70.06769
Southeast Corner	41.62395	-70.06769
Southwest Corner	41.62395	-70.07251

The emergency regulation enacting this closed area is effective immediately. However, prior to implementing a permanent regulation, DMF has scheduled a public hearing at the Harwich Town Hall on March 23, 2016 at 6PM. Written public comment will also be accepted through noon on Friday, April 1st. Please see the [public hearing notice](#) for more details.

Harwich Reef Site and Closure Area



For more information about the Harwich Reef Project, please contact Mark Rousseau at the Division of Marine Fisheries (978-828-0308 x 162 and mark.rousseau@state.ma.us).

Please visit our website:
www.mass.gov/marinefisheries