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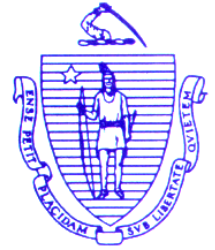
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Marine Fisheries Advisory

DMF Codifies Regulations Affecting Shellfish and Mobile Gear Fishing

New Shellfish Rules

DMF has filed new shellfish regulations. These regulations codify longstanding permit conditions and policies affecting the sanitary harvest, handling and transport of shellfish; this includes those conditions set forth in the so-called “Shellfish Affidavit”. This action now ensures that rules are in explicit conformity to the National Shellfish Sanitation Program’s (NSSP) Model Ordinance.

The shellfish regulations also address DMF’s longstanding Shellfish Relay Program. This program, conducted in strict conformity with NSSP requirements, transplants bacteriologically contaminated shellfish and transplants them in clean waters so that they may naturally purify and propagate and eventually be harvested for consumption. The Shellfish Relay Program thereby provides an affordable means for municipalities to enhance their local shellfish fisheries, while also depleting inshore contaminated shellfish resources and reducing the public health risk associated with contaminated shellfish.

In accordance with Chapter 47 §112 of the Acts of 2017, DMF is implementing a \$1.00 per bushel fee for relayed shellfish beginning in 2019. This fee will be paid by the municipality receiving the shellfish to DMF where it will be deposited into a dedicated account. At the end of the year, DMF will disburse funds back to the source municipalities. Payment will be made on a proportional basis relative to the quantity of shellfish harvested from each source municipality’s waters. This funding will be used by the municipalities to offset some of the costs incurred related to the Shellfish Relay Program.

New Mobile Gear Rules

DMF’s longstanding mobile gear regulations have been re-codified. While most of the regulatory changes are designed to more clearly and efficiently organize existing regulations, DMF did modernize how the state’s mobile gear closure boundaries are expressed. These boundaries are now defined using latitudinal and longitudinal coordinates, rather than the line-of-sight coordinates, LORAN-C, and historic maritime lines that were previously used. Maps and coordinates for each closure area may be found on DMF’s website. Two slight modifications were made to the mobile gear closures. First, the Area 3 closure from Hull to Plymouth now goes into effect on May 1st, rather than April 1st. Second, the closure boundary for Area 4 from Plymouth to Provincetown was modified slightly in the southwestern portion of Cape Cod Bay to better follow a depth contour.

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