



# The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

## Division of Marine Fisheries

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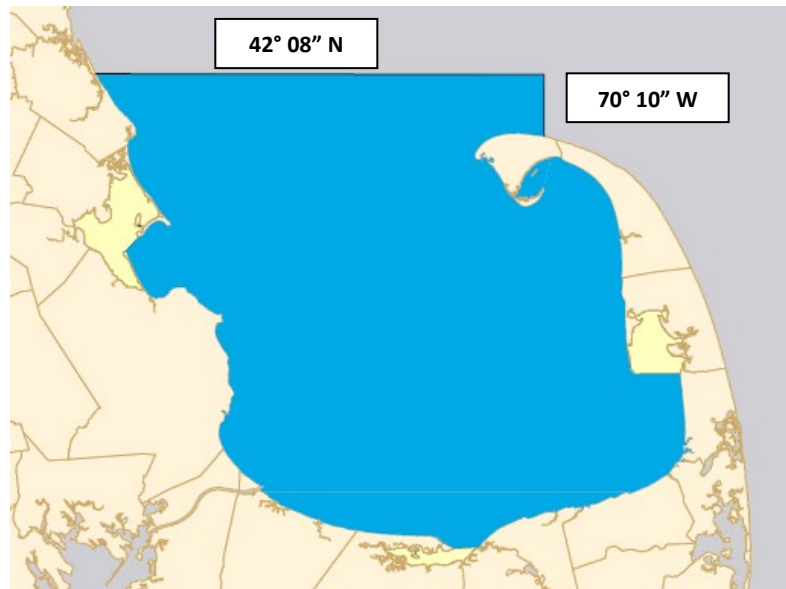
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March 26, 2021  
*Marine Fisheries Advisory*

### REMINDER OF SEASONAL SMALL VESSEL SPEED LIMIT IN CAPE COD BAY

This message serves to remind mariners that there is a 10-knot small vessel (less than 65' overall) speed limit in Cape Cod Bay to protect endangered right whales from the threat of ship strikes. During the late-winter and early-spring, right whales migrate into and aggregate in Cape Cod Bay where they feed on zooplankton. On March 21, an aerial survey of the Bay sighted 89 right whales, including 3 mother calf pairs. As we move into the spring, these whales begin to feed closer to the surface and become more susceptible to ship strikes. Ship strikes are a significant source of mortality to these endangered whales. However, the lethality of ship strikes is greatly reduced when vessels are operating at less than 10-knots speed.



**Restricted Speed Limit Area** 

**Exempted Inshore Waters** 

This small vessel speed limit—established in 2019—applies from March 1 – April 30 within those waters of Cape Cod Bay south of 42° 08' north latitude, as well as those waters north of Cape Cod that are west of 70°10' west longitude (see map). A complementary [federal speed limit](#) applies to all vessels 65' overall length and greater. DMF may extend or rescind this seasonal small vessel speed limit based on the continued presence or absence of whales.

This small vessel speed limit does not apply to emergency and enforcement personnel, including federal whale disentanglement teams. Additionally, small vessel traffic operating within the inshore waters of Plymouth, Duxbury, Kingston, Barnstable and Wellfleet Harbors are exempt.

For more information regarding the management of protected marine species in Massachusetts, please visit our website ([www.mass.gov/marinefisheries](http://www.mass.gov/marinefisheries)) or call DMF at 617-626-1520.