



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Division of Marine Fisheries

251 Causeway Street, Suite 400, Boston, MA 02114
p: (617) 626-1520 | f: (617) 626-1509
www.mass.gov/marinefisheries



CHARLES D. BAKER
Governor

KARYN E. POLITO
Lt. Governor

KATHLEEN A. THEOHARIDES
Secretary

RONALD S. AMIDON
Commissioner

DANIEL J. MCKIERNAN
Director

April 6, 2022
Marine Fisheries Advisory

CONCH POT SEASON TO OPEN AND TRAP GEAR CLOSURES TO PROTECT RIGHT WHALES

The state's commercial conch pot season is scheduled to open April 15, 2022. While this generally authorizes the use of conch pot gear within state-waters, there are two overarching state and federal trap gear closures to protect right whales that apply. These closures are described in the bullets below.

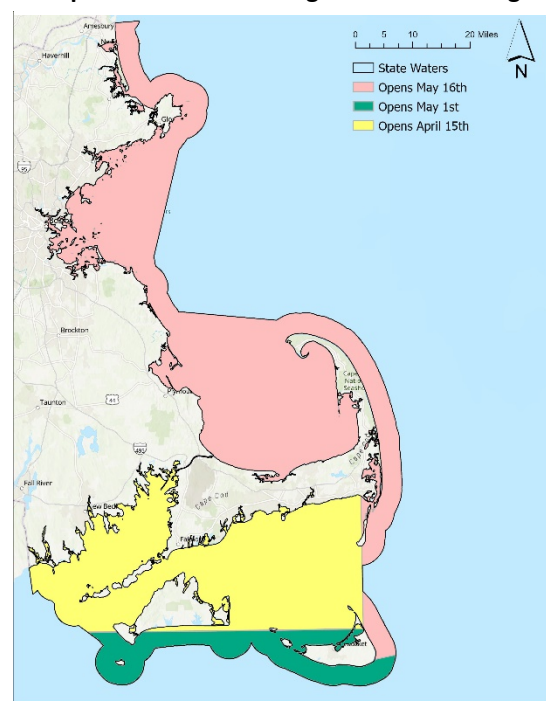
- All state-waters north of Cape Cod and all state waters east of 70° 00' west longitude to all commercial trap gear fishing, including conch pots. The closure remains in effect until May 15, although DMF may rescind the closure within state waters after April 30 or extend it past May 15 based on the presence and absence of right whales. This complements the federal [Massachusetts Restricted Area and Restricted Area North](#).
- State and federal waters bounded by 41°20' north latitude to the north, 40°30' north latitude to the south, 71°19' west longitude to the west, and 69°30' west longitude to the east are closed to commercial trap fishing through April 30 under the federal [South Islands Restricted Area](#). Accordingly, during this closure, conch pot gear may not be set in these waters, including those state waters south of 41°20' north latitude.

With these closures in consideration, beginning April 15 conch pot gear may only be set in state waters south and west of Cape Cod that are north of 41°20' north latitude and west of 70° 00' west longitude. Effective May 1, conch pot gear may be set south of 41°20' north latitude. Then the gear may be deployed east of 70° 00' west longitude or north of Cape Cod on May 16 (unless the closure is otherwise lifted by DMF). See map for more details.

Conch pot fishermen are also reminded their buoy lines must comply with the state's buoy line modification requirements for protected species. This includes the new buoy line marking requirements for 2022, as well as the weak rope and buoy line diameter rules implemented for 2021. More information on these requirements may be found on the state's [buoy line modification webpage](#) and in the [buoy line marking guide](#) and [buoy line modification FAQ](#).

For 2022, knobbed and channeled whelks the minimum gauge width remains 3 1/8". To determine compliance

Map of Closures Affecting Conch Pot Fishing



with this minimum size, the Massachusetts Environmental Police will measure whelks with a chute gauge with a width of 3 1/8", length of 6" and wall height of 1 1/2" and using the "any orientation" method of measurement. This method of measurement orients the whelk to the chute gauge with its operculum facing down and laying as flat as possible on the chute, should a whelk pass through the chute with its siphonal canal at any angle to the side wall, it shall be considered undersized.

For more information regarding the protected species or the conch pot fishery, please visit our website (www.mass.gov/marinefisheries) or call DMF at 617-626-1520.