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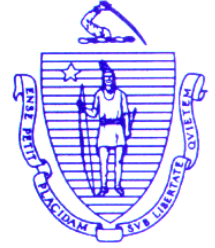
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April 16, 2020

Marine Fisheries Advisory

Recreational Striped Bass Fishing Measures for 2020

New recreational fishing rules have been adopted in Massachusetts to increase the conservation of Atlantic striped bass. The size of fish that can be recreationally harvested has been further restricted to end overfishing on the resource, while additional fishing gear requirements have been established to address recreational catch and release mortality. The commercial striped bass fishery has been similarly reduced through a quota cut. These changes were recommended by the Division of Marine Fisheries, approved by the Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission, and take effect on May 1, 2020.

- **Slot Limit:** Only striped bass measuring at least 28” and less than 35” (total length) may be retained in the recreational fishery. Recreational anglers may harvest and possess one striped bass per day within this slot limit, year-round. Striped bass measuring less than 28”, or 35” and greater, must be immediately released.
- **Circle Hooks:** Recreational anglers are required to use an in-line circle hook when fishing for striped bass with whole or cut natural baits. A circle hook is defined as a fishing hook designed and manufactured so that the point of the hook is not offset from the plane of the shank and bend and is turned perpendicularly back towards the shank to form a circular or oval shape. (See our [Circle Hook Brochure](#) for images).

Exceptions. This requirement does *not* apply in the following circumstances: 1) when a recreational angler is fishing aboard a for-hire vessel on a for-hire trip; and 2) when a recreational angler is fishing with natural bait attached to an artificial lure that is trolled, jigged, or casted and retrieved (e.g., “tube and worm”).

- **Non-lethal Removal Devices:** When using a device to remove striped bass from the water, recreational anglers must use a non-lethal device. A non-lethal device is defined as any tool used in the removal of striped bass from the water or to assist in the releasing of striped bass that does not pierce, puncture, or otherwise cause invasive damage to the fish that may result in its mortality. This effectively prohibits the gaffing of striped bass by recreational anglers.

Refer to our list of [Frequently Asked Questions](#) for more information. Email us at marine.fish@mass.gov with additional questions, so we can update this list accordingly.

Additional information about recreational saltwater fishing in Massachusetts can be found here:

www.mass.gov/recreational-saltwater-fishing