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Director

Commonwealth of Massachusetts

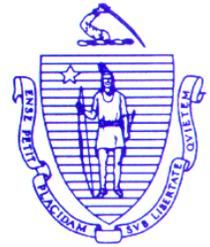
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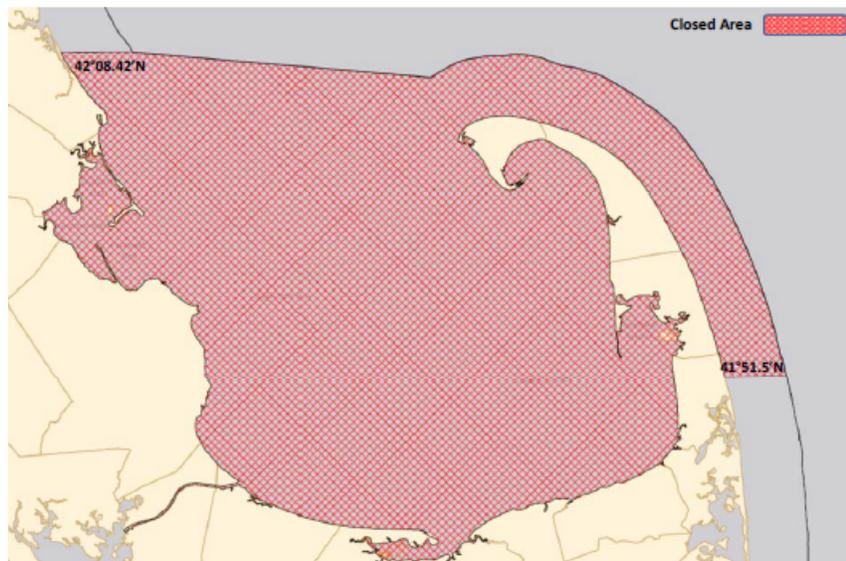
April 26, 2019

Marine Fisheries Advisory

SEASONAL TRAP GEAR CLOSURE EXTENDED THROUGH MAY 8TH

The continued presence of endangered right whales off Cape Cod results in the Director of the Division of Marine Fisheries extending the seasonal Large Whale Seasonal Trap Gear Closure through May 8th ([Notice of Declaration](#)) for certain waters within Cape Cod Bay and along the Outer Cape. This extended closure only applies within those waters under the jurisdiction of the Commonwealth within Cape Cod Bay south of 42° 8.42' north latitude and east of Cape Cod north of 41° 51.5' north latitude at Nauset Light (see map). This closure does not extend into any federal waters, including those waters north of Cape Cod on Stellwagen Bank. Accordingly, both recreational and commercial trap fishermen are prohibited to setting any trap gear in these waters until May 9th. The duration of this closure extension may be shortened or extended based on continuing aerial and vessel based surveys and fishermen will be notified of any such adjustments.

Large Whale Trap Gear Closure Extension Area – Area Closed Through May 8, 2019



On April 25, 2019, the Provincetown Center for Coastal Studies conducted an aerial survey for right whales along Cape Cod. The survey estimated there were approximately 57 right whales feeding at or near the surface in Cape Cod Bay. Additionally, *Calanus* plankton counts are high indicating that the whales are likely to remain aggregated in the area to feed. This trap gear closure extension protects these endangered whales from entanglements in fixed fishing gear, which are a major source of mortality for these animals. Right whales are critically endangered species and their population has been decreasing since 2010 due to continued mortality and low birth rates. They seasonally migrate into Massachusetts waters and aggregate in Cape Cod Bay to feed on zooplankton. In recent years, more than 50% of the known right whale population has been observed in our waters during late winter and early spring.

For more information about the management of protected species in Massachusetts, contact DMF at 617-626-1520 or visit our website at www.mass.gov/marinefisheries.