



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Division of Marine Fisheries

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April 30, 2021

Marine Fisheries Advisory

Reminder: Trap Gear Closure in Effect Until May 15

This advisory serves as a reminder the trap gear closure in Massachusetts waters north and east of Cape Cod remains in effect through May 15 (see [map](#)). In prior years, the trap gear closure in the Massachusetts Restricted Area would remain in effect through April 30. This year, this trap gear closure was extended in both time and space to include all waters under the jurisdiction of the Commonwealth north and east of Cape Cod through May 15. This trap gear closure is designed to prevent endangered right whales from becoming entangled in trap gear.

The Division of Marine Fisheries, in conjunction with the Provincetown Center for Coastal Studies, continues aerial surveillance of right whales within Cape Cod Bay and Massachusetts Bay. The most recent flight, on April 28, 2021, observed 86 right whales in the waters of northern Cape Cod Bay, southern Massachusetts Bay, and Stellwagen Bank. Additional surveillance flights are anticipated to occur over the next several days. DMF will reevaluate the status of this closure based on the presence or absence of whales. Should observational data demonstrate right whales have migrated out of Massachusetts waters, DMF may lift the trap gear closure prior to May 15.

Given the density of right whales around Massachusetts waters, the seasonal speed restricted area in Cape Cod Bay was extended until May 15 (see [notice](#)). This requires all vessels less than 65' overall length operate at a speed of 10 knots or less in those waters of Cape Cod Bay south of 42°08' north longitude and those waters north of Cape Cod west of 70°10' west longitude. Similar to the trap gear closure, this speed limit rule will be reevaluated in real time in response to presence or absence of right whales. This rule is designed to prevent small vessel ship strikes involving these endangered whales.

For more information regarding protected marine species in Massachusetts, please visit our website:
www.mass.gov/marinefisheries.