



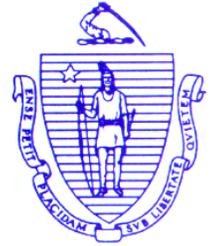
David E. Pierce
Director

Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Division of Marine Fisheries

251 Causeway Street, Suite 400
Boston, Massachusetts 02114

(617)626-1520
fax (617)626-1509



Charles D. Baker
Governor

Karyn E. Polito
Lieutenant Governor
Matthew A. Beaton
Secretary

George N. Peterson, Jr.
Commissioner
Mary-Lee King
Deputy Commissioner

May 4, 2017

Marine Fisheries Advisory

Trap Gear Closure Lifted; Right Whales Leaving Cape Cod Bay

The trap closure extension in Cape Cod Bay has been lifted effective Friday May 5 because nearly all the whales that were aggregated in Cape Cod Bay have departed as expected. DMF filed emergency regulations last week to extend the prohibition of trap gear within certain waters of Cape Cod Bay. This closure extension was enacted because in mid-April there was an unprecedented aggregation of over 200 right whales feeding on dense plankton, and more than 100 remained just days before the scheduled May 1 opening. Feeding right whales are susceptible to entanglement in vertical buoy lines.

Over the last week nearly all the right whales have departed the bay. The aerial survey, conducted on May 4, observed only 10 whales within the closure area and were widely scattered across the area. These remaining few whales are not expected to stay in the bay. This lifting of the closure allows commercial and recreational fishermen to begin the process of setting their gear in the previously closed waters of Cape Cod Bay.

As right whales are migrating off the Massachusetts coast, all mariners are advised to be cautious of their presence. It is unlawful to set or haul any lobster gear – or even approach - within 500 yards of a right whale. If you observe a whale entangled in fishing gear while on the water, report it immediately to the Center for Coastal Studies (800-900-3622), the Office of Environmental Law Enforcement (800-632-8075) or the National Marine Fisheries Service's Entanglement Hotline (866-755-6622).

For more information, visit our website:

www.mass.gov/marinefisheries