



David E. Pierce, PhD.  
Director

# Commonwealth of Massachusetts

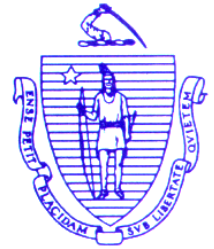
## Division of Marine Fisheries

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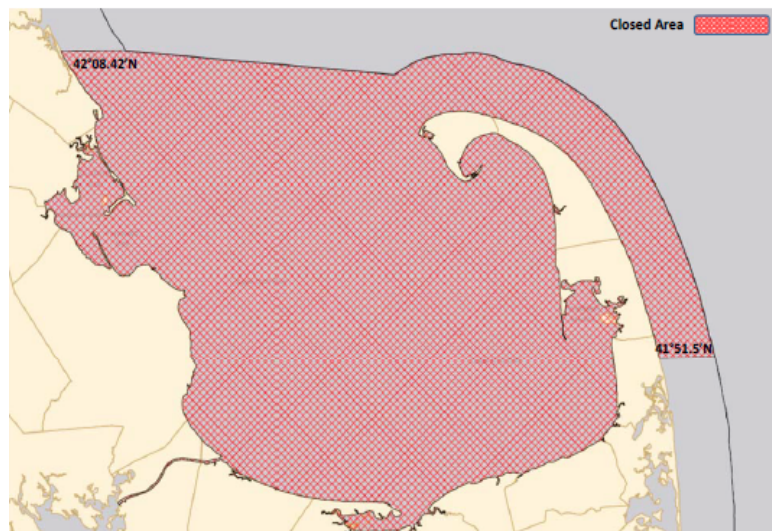
May 6, 2019

### Marine Fisheries Advisory

### SEASONAL TRAP GEAR CLOSURE EXTENDED THROUGH MAY 14<sup>TH</sup>

The continued presence of endangered right whales in the waters off Cape Cod results in the Director of the Division of Marine Fisheries extending the seasonal Large Whale Seasonal Trap Gear Closure through May 14, 2019 ([Notice of Declaration](#)). This closure extension applies only in 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 15<sup>th</sup>.

Large Whale Trap Gear Closure Extension Area – Area Closed Through May 14, 2019



Recent aerial surveys by the Provincetown Center for Coastal Studies demonstrate that right whales remain in the waters of Cape Cod Bay feeding at or near the surface in Cape Cod Bay. Additionally, *Calanus* plankton counts indicate that the whales are likely to remain aggregated and feeding in the area. DMF will continue to closely monitor the presence of whales off Cape Cod and the duration of trap gear closure extension may be shortened or extended in response. DMF will update the public regarding any such adjustments.

Right whales are critically endangered species and their population has been decreasing since 2010 due to continued mortality and low birth rates. These whales 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 were observed in our waters during late winter and early spring. 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.

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](http://www.mass.gov/marinefisheries).