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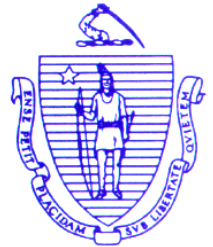
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May 9, 2019

Marine Fisheries Advisory

DMF RESCINDS SEASONAL LARGE WHALE TRAP GEAR CLOSURE AND SEASONAL SPEED LIMIT IN WATERS OFF CAPE COD

The most recent aerial survey by the Provincetown Center for Coastal Studies demonstrate that right whales have migrated out of those state-waters adjacent to Cape Cod. As a result, the Director of the Division of Marine Fisheries has rescinded both the Large Whale Trap Gear Closure Extension and Seasonal Speed Limit Restrictions ([Notice of Declaration](#)) effective May 10th. These rules were previously in place through May 14th.

Effective tomorrow, commercial and recreational lobstermen may set their trap gear in those waters north and east of Cape Cod that were previously closed to fixed gear. Additionally, boaters operating vessels that are smaller than 65' over length may operate at a boat speed of greater than 10 knots. We advise that vessel operators continue to operate with caution. Through May 15th, vessels with an overall length of 65' and greater shall comply with the federal 10 knot speed limit in the waters of Cape Cod Bay ([federal rule](#)).

Right whales are a 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 was observed in our waters during late winter and early spring. The Large Whale Trap Gear Closure and Cape Cod Bay Seasonal Speed Restriction protects these endangered whales from entanglements in fixed fishing gear and vessel collisions, which are a major sources of mortality for these endangered 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.