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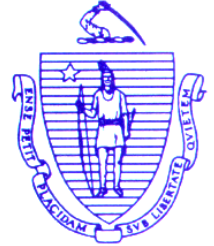
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Marine Fisheries Advisory

COMMERCIAL SCUP TRIP LIMIT FOR SMALL MESH TRAWLERS

The Division of Marine Fisheries has implemented a revision to the commercial scup trip limit for trawl vessels fishing with nets that have a minimum mesh of less than 5" diamond. During the period of April 15–June 15, this limit now stands at 2,000 pounds. The limit for the remainder of the year is unchanged (200 pounds during June 16–September 30, and 1,000 pounds during October 1–April 14). Consequently, vessels participating in the state-waters small mesh trawl squid fishery may now retain up to 2,000 pounds of legal-sized scup (9").

This regulatory change was authorized by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and aligns with changes implemented in federal waters as recommended by the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council. These management bodies supported a multi-state request (from MA and RI) to seasonally increase this incidental limit to enhance the retention of legal-sized scup caught during the nearshore springtime small-mesh trawl fishery for squid.

Massachusetts' state-waters small mesh trawl squid fishery opened on April 23 and is scheduled to remain open until June 9. During this period, trawlers may fish with net mesh measuring at least 1 7/8" in the Small Mesh Squid Trawl Exempted Area. Once the state-waters squid fishery closes, trawlers fishing in the waters under the jurisdiction of the Commonwealth south and west of Cape Cod will be required to use nets with a mesh measuring at least 6 1/2" square or diamond throughout the cod end.

For more information regarding the management of scup in Massachusetts, please visit our website (www.mass.gov/marinefisheries) or call DMF at 617-626-1520.