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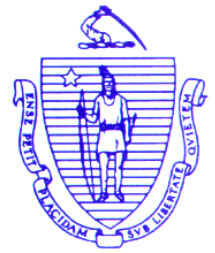
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May 10, 2019

Marine Fisheries Advisory

REMINDER:

WHELK GAUGING AND METHOD OF MEASUREMENT

This advisory serves to remind fishermen how to properly gauge knobbed and channeled whelks. All whelks are to be gauged using the chute gauge and any orientation method of measurement (see image). The chute gauge is an open top rectangular gauge made of rigid material. For 2019 and 2020, the gauge must measure at least 6” length by 3” width by 1 ½” height. The any orientation method of measurement requires fishermen to gauge each whelk with its operculum facing down and as flat on the chute gauge as possible. If the whelk can pass through the gauge with its siphonal canal at any angle to the side walls, it is considered of sub-legal length and must be returned to the ocean immediately. It is unlawful to possess sub-legal sized whelks for any period longer than is necessary for immediate measurement and discarding. To assist fishermen with gauging whelks and improve compliance with DMF’s minimum size management measures, DMF has published a [video](#) demonstrating the proper gauging and a [new webpage](#) for all critical information regarding the whelk resource and the management of the whelk fishery.

Chute Gauge & Any Orientation Method of Measurement



This winter, DMF implemented a 10-year schedule to biennially increase the whelk gauge’s chute size (see table) to enhance spawning stock biomass protections. DMF’s recent stock assessment for channeled whelk in Massachusetts demonstrates the resource is overfished with overfishing occurring and DMF’s size at maturity data demonstrates female channeled whelk in Nantucket Sound do not reach 50% size at maturity until their shell width is 3 7/8”. The terminal gauge width in this schedule is 3 5/8” corresponding to an animal with a shell width of approximately 3 7/8”.

2019-2029 Schedule to Increase Whelk Chute Gauge Width						
	2019	2021	2023	2025	2027	2029
Chute Gauge Width	3”	3 1/8”	3 1/4”	3 3/8”	3 1/2”	3 5/8”

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