



# The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

## Division of Marine Fisheries

251 Causeway Street, Suite 400, Boston, MA 02114  
p: (617) 626-1520 | f: (617) 626-1509  
[www.mass.gov/marinefisheries](http://www.mass.gov/marinefisheries)



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June 3, 2020

### Marine Fisheries Advisory

#### **Cape Cod Canal Closed to Commercial Striped Bass Fishing**

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The Division of Marine Fisheries today announced the closure of the Cape Cod Canal to commercial striped bass fishing. Effective immediately, all striped bass retained from the Cape Cod Canal or possessed within 1,000 feet of the Canal's shoreline must adhere to the recreational fishing limits of one fish of at least 28" total length but less than 35" total length. An exception is made for the possession of striped bass 35" or greater legally caught elsewhere for commercial purposes and being actively transported through the 1,000-foot buffer area to a primary dealer.

This action is taken to address numerous and worsening public nuisance and safety problems arising from increased fishing activity along the Canal. These problems, including anglers conducting themselves in threatening and unruly manners, parking illegally on adjacent roads, trespassing over private property, and interfering with other recreational activities, have been especially acute on open commercial striped bass fishing days. Although the primary mission of the Canal is navigation, a secondary objective of the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers' management of the surrounding area is to provide recreational opportunities for the public. Accordingly, it is appropriate for the Division of Marine Fisheries to prohibit commercial striped bass fishing along the Canal in order to return the area to its recreational purposes.

This regulation is also expected to greatly enhance compliance and enforcement with this year's recreational striped bass [conservation rules](#) (i.e., the 28" to less than 35" slot limit, circle hook requirement when fishing with natural bait, and prohibition on gaffs and other injurious removal devices) at one of the most productive fishing locations for large bass. Given the Canal's great popularity as a shore fishing location for striped bass, the Massachusetts Environmental Police and local police departments rely heavily on public tips of illegal fishing activity; however, these tips have previously been hindered by the virtual indistinguishability of recreational and commercial striped bass fishermen. The closure of the Canal to commercial striped bass fishing (in combination with the new 35" commercial minimum size) will enhance the ability of anglers to see and accurately report illegal striped bass fishing activity. Please report tips to the Massachusetts Environmental Police at 800-632-8075.

For the purpose of this closure, the Cape Cod Canal is defined as all waters and shoreline bounded by the most seaward extent of the state pier at Taylor's Point ("A") to the most seaward extent of the northern breakwater jetty at the east end ("B") to the most seaward extent of the southern breakwater jetty at the east end ("C") to the northernmost tip of the peninsula at the end of President's Road in

Bourne ("D"). Please see the map below.

This closure of the Cape Cod Canal to commercial striped bass fishing has been adopted as an emergency regulation, pursuant to M.G.L. c. 30A, §2, for the preservation of public safety and the general welfare of the community. As such, it shall remain in effect for 90 days, unless adopted as a final regulation. It is anticipated that a public hearing will be scheduled for this summer and a final regulation could be voted on by the Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission at its business meeting on August 20, 2020.

