



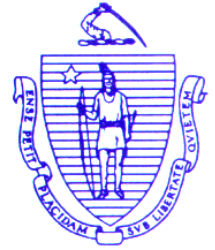
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June 7, 2017

Marine Fisheries Advisory

State Waters Small Mesh Trawl Fishery for Longfin Squid to Close on June 10

The small-mesh trawl fishery for longfin squid in the Commonwealth's southern waters of Nantucket and Vineyard Sounds and south of the Islands will close as scheduled on Saturday June 10. Trawlers still can fish those waters with nets having 6 ½ inch or greater mesh in the cod end and 6 inches throughout the rest of the net.

State regulations enable the Director to extend the small-mesh trawl fishery. DMF used this authority to extend the fishery in recent years. This authority is utilized when available sea sampling data, particularly that data provided by the Northeast Fishery Observer Program, reveal sizeable catches of marketable squid with relatively low levels of bycatch of other managed species. DMF utilized this authority most recently in 2016 when the state-waters fishery was extended by one-week.

This year available data demonstrate that the inshore squid fishery has produced relatively low catch rates of squid when compared to recent years. While some fishermen have requested the fishery be extended in hopes that improved weather conditions will result in increased catch rates, available data do not justify extending the squid fishery in state-waters. Trawlers with a moratorium or incidental squid permit are still authorized to fish for squid in federal waters under the Trimester 2 (May-August) quota.

It is noteworthy that the 2016 fishery did extremely well due to a high abundance of squid. In fact, the fishery in adjacent federal waters continued well into the early summer period, including under a 2,500 pound bycatch limit after the Trimester 2 federal quota was taken. Continued directed squid fishing under this bycatch limit after the Trimester 2 quota was taken has prompted the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC) to consider changing how the federal Trimester 2 quota will be managed for 2018.

The MAFMC recently held public hearings on these potential management measures and is scheduled to take action during the ongoing MAFMC meeting. For more information about the management of the federal squid fishery, including potential changes to the management of the federal Trimester 2 quota in 2018, contact the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (www.mafmc.org).

Please visit our website:
www.mass.gov/marinefisheries