



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Division of Marine Fisheries

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June 26, 2020

Marine Fisheries Advisory

Menhaden (Pogies) experience a die-off along the Merrimack River

This week, at least one natural kill of menhaden and other species has been documented along the Merrimack River in Amesbury. Dead menhaden have been noted along the shoreline and being carried by the current all the way to the mouth of the river. Marine Fisheries biologists investigated the die-off and it has been determined that human interaction is not responsible for this mortality. When large schools of fish enter warm-water estuaries and rivers in large numbers during the summer months they can locally deplete the water's dissolved oxygen, making survival impossible. Warmer surface temperatures and reduced water flow exacerbate this drop in dissolved oxygen, unfortunately causing the suffocation of fish in the immediate area.

Die-offs of this nature are a natural phenomenon that can be observed during these times of increased menhaden population density. We encourage residents who view die-offs such as this to report the location and take photo documentation for further investigation. Die-off reports can be sent to marine.fish@mass.gov or called into our main office lines.



Merrimack River fish die-off, June 25, 2020

Management and regulation of menhaden is overseen by the Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF), having adopted compliance criteria of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission Menhaden Plan and approaches best suited for the Massachusetts menhaden fishing industry.