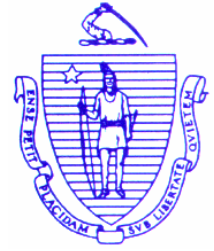




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**July 14, 2006**

**Marine Fisheries Advisory**

**MASSACHUSETTS MARINE FISHERIES ADVISORY COMMISSION  
APPROVES IMMEDIATE CLOSURE OF HORSESHOE CRAB BAIT FISHERY  
IN THE PLEASANT BAY/LITTLE PLEASANT BAY COMPLEX**

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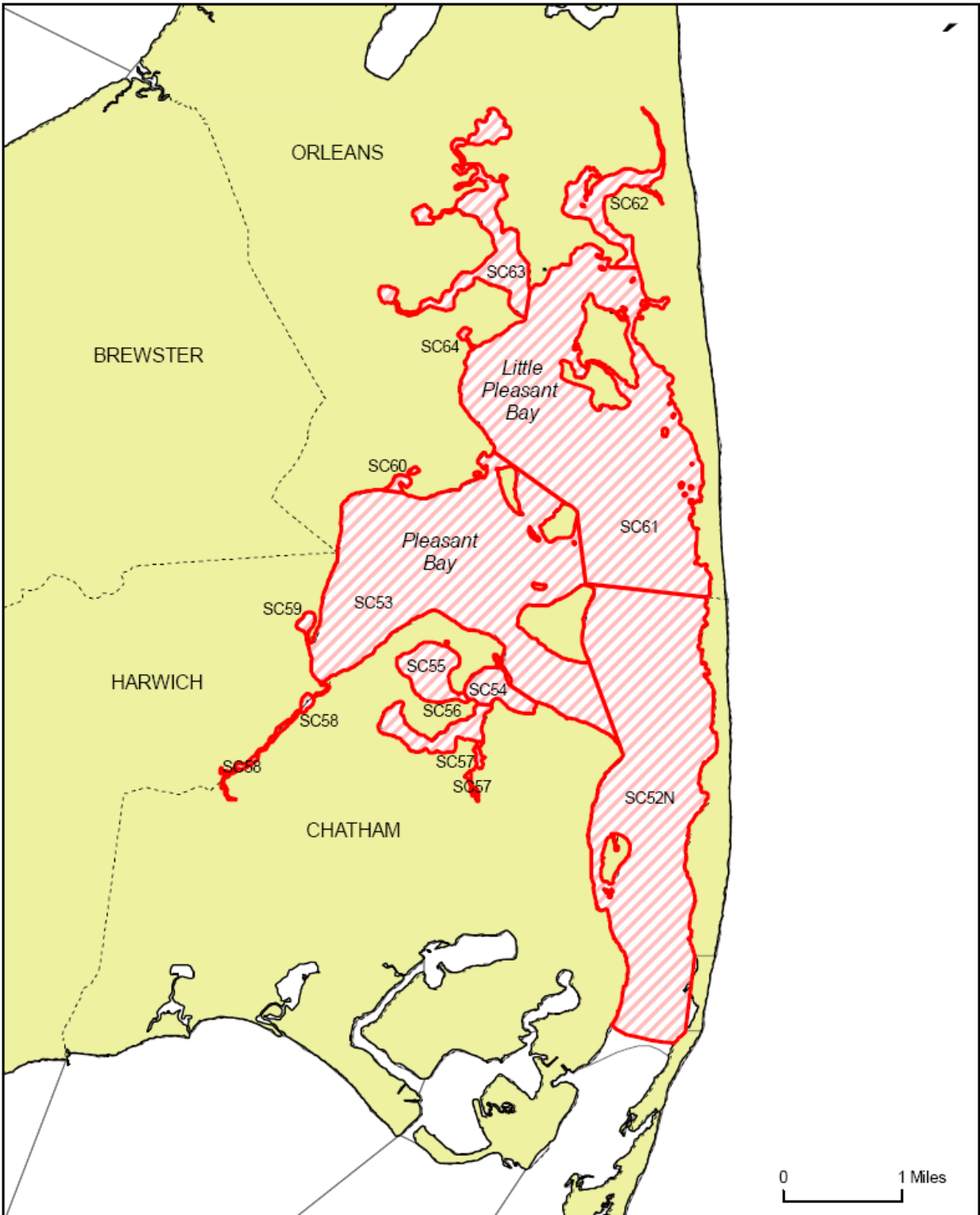
As specified in 322 CMR 6.34, the Division of Marine Fisheries (*Marine Fisheries*), with approval of the Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission (MFC), is **closing the bait fishery for horseshoe crabs in the Pleasant Bay/Little Pleasant Bay complex effective Monday, July 17, 2006 through the remainder of 2006**. The Pleasant Bay/Little Pleasant Bay complex includes Chatham Harbor North, Pochet Creek, Round Cove, Bassing Harbor, Ryders Cove, Crows Pond, Frostfish Creek, Muddy Creek, Quanset Pond, Namequoit River and Paw Wah Pond (see map below). This emergency action is necessary to ensure the sustainable management of the horseshoe crab fishery in the Pleasant Bay system. Note that this closure does not affect the biomedical horseshoe crab fishery, which may continue to harvest horseshoe crabs in these areas for biomedical applications. Harvesters collecting horseshoe crabs exclusively for use by the biomedical industry are reminded of the requirement to release horseshoe crabs alive in the area of capture.


*Marine Fisheries* recently became aware of a substantial increase in bait horseshoe crab landings; horseshoe crab landings in the bait fishery increased from a reported 194 crabs in 2001 to 25,199 crabs in 2005. Although this increased harvest is seen in many areas of the Commonwealth, the spike in landings in Pleasant Bay indicate that current harvest in the Pleasant Bay/Little Pleasant Bay complex has reached a level of effort that is not sustainable. Furthermore, a majority of harvesters are failing to report their harvest levels within the required reporting periods, complicating effective management of a sustainable fishery.

*Marine Fisheries* will continue to monitor horseshoe crab harvest coast-wide. For further information please contact Frank Germano at 508.910.6344 or Melanie Griffin at 617.626.1528 or visit our website at [www.mass.gov/marinefisheries](http://www.mass.gov/marinefisheries).

# Horseshoe Crab Bait Fishery Closures

Effective Monday July 17, 2006



 Closed to the harvest of horseshoe crab for bait