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December 11, 2009
Marine Fisheries Advisory

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
Scheduled for January 19, 2010**

Under the provisions of M.G.L. Ch 30A and pursuant to the authority found in M.G.L. Ch. 130 ss. 17A & 80 Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) and the Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission (MFC) have scheduled a hearing to accept comments on **DMF proposals to improve management of horseshoe crab fisheries (322 CMR 6.00) to prevent local depletion and enhance spawning by adoption of one or more measures among the following:**

1. **Size limits based on prosomal width.** Comments will be accepted on a minimum size for males and a slot limit for females. DMF's preferred option for males is a preferred minimum size of 7.1" (180 mm); for females, the preferred option is a minimum size of 8.7" (220 mm) and a maximum size of 10.25" (260 mm); only female crabs that measure between 8.7" and 10.25" would be lawful to harvest. These limits may also apply to both harvesters and dealers and would apply to crabs imported into Massachusetts from other states, unless properly tagged with state of origin.
2. **Spawning closure.** Comments will be accepted on a seven day, lunar cycle-based closure in late May to ensure some spawning opportunity for crabs. DMF's preferred lunar closure is three days before and three days after the date of the second peak lunar tide in May attributed to either a new or full moon. If adopted, consideration would be given to lifting the current prohibition on weekend harvest.
3. **Possession limits.** Comments will be accepted on whether to amend the current daily possession limits of 400 crabs per day for bait harvesters and 1,000 crabs per day for biomedical harvesters. Comments also are sought on whether the 400-crab limit applied to bait harvesters is warranted after the May-June spawning season.

A public hearing has been scheduled for 6PM on January 19, 2010 at the Cape Cod Natural History Museum (869 Main St./Rte 6A, Brewster, MA 02631)

Comments received by e-mail (marine.fish@state.ma.us), fax (617.626.1509), or mail (251

Causeway St., Suite 400;

Boston, MA 02114) will be accepted until 5PM on Friday, January 22, 2010.

Copies of proposed regulations may be obtained by contacting Melanie Griffin by email

(Melanie.Griffin@state.ma.us),

phone (617.626.1528), or at the above fax and mailing address.