



# The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

## Division of Marine Fisheries

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*Marine Fisheries Advisory*

### Updates for Coastal Lobster Permit Holders

**Seasonal Commercial Trap Gear Closure Reminder:** The seasonal commercial trap gear closure goes into effect on February 1, 2022. The closure includes all waters under the jurisdiction of the Commonwealth north and east of Cape Cod, as well as federal waters on Stellwagen Bank and within the Outer Cape Cod Lobster Conservation Management Area. The closure does not extend into those southern state waters in Lobster Conservation Management Area 2. This closure was extended in 2021 to include state waters north from Scituate to the New Hampshire maritime border ([see map](#)). The closure remains in effect until May 15 but may be rescinded before or extend past that date based on the observed presence or absence of right whales in state waters.

The purpose of this closure is to protect seasonal aggregations of right whales from potential entanglements in buoy lines. Compliance with this closure is critically important to the Commonwealth's right whale conservation strategy. DMF will be partnering with the Massachusetts Environmental Police and a small group of commercial trap fishermen to remove any lost or abandoned gear remaining in the closure area after this date. To assist us in this, DMF is requesting fishermen contact DMF if they observe any lost or abandoned gear and provide us with information regarding the location, i.e., latitudinal/longitudinal coordinates or the TD's (LORAN coordinates) of this gear. Please e-mail any such information to [conservationsolutions@mass.gov](mailto:conservationsolutions@mass.gov).

**2022 Trap Tag Order Form Update:** Trap tag order forms will be mailed to permit holders within one to two weeks. Please note the coastwide trap tag price, negotiated by ASMFC on behalf of the Northeast states, has increased from \$.14 to \$.17 per tag for 2022. This is the first contractual price increase since 2015. Upon receipt, permit holders are encouraged to submit trap tag order forms as soon as possible.

**Proposed trap tag deadline change:** DMF is proposing to amend the regulation that establishes the deadline for affixing year-specific trap tags on traps. The current regulation requires all trap tags to be installed in traps by June 1, and DMF is proposing to move this deadline up by one month to May 1. A [public hearing](#) will be held on January 5<sup>th</sup>, and if approved will be in effect by May 1, 2022.

**2021 Commercial Permits Extended Through January 31, 2022:** Due to delays in the processing of 2022 permit renewals, the Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) has extended the validity of 2021 commercial, dealer, and special permits through January 31, 2022. Valid 2022 permits will be required beginning on February 1, 2022. For more information, click [here](#).

**Limited Entry Permit Renewal Deadline Reminder:** Renewal applications for limited entry permits or permits that have limited entry endorsements or a striped bass endorsement **must be received in our office or postmarked by February 28, 2022.**

If you have any questions, please email us at [marine.fish@mass.gov](mailto:marine.fish@mass.gov).