



**Daniel J. McKiernan**  
*Acting Director*

# Commonwealth of Massachusetts

## Division of Marine Fisheries

251 Causeway Street, Suite 400

Boston, Massachusetts, 02114

(617) 626-1520

fax (617) 626-1509



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*Governor*

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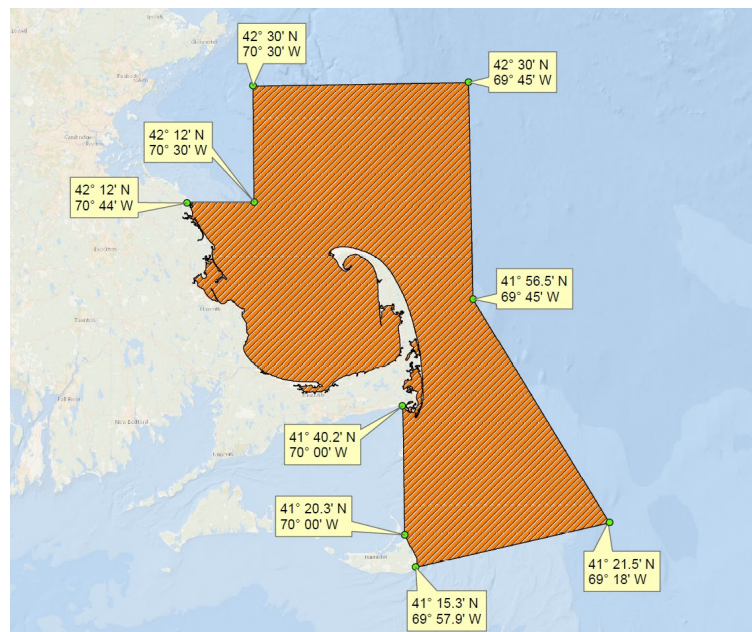
January 23, 2020

### Marine Fisheries Advisory

#### **REMINDER: LARGE WHALE SEASONAL TRAP GEAR CLOSURE IN EFFECT ON FEBRUARY 1<sup>ST</sup>**

This advisory serves to remind recreational and commercial trap fishermen that the Large Whale Seasonal Trap Gear Closure (Closure) is in effect from February 1 through April 30. The Closure may be extended into May if right whales remain aggregated in the area. The Closure area encompasses the waters of Cape Cod Bay, Stellwagen Bank and eastern Cape Cod (see map). State officials will be patrolling this area in advance of and during the closure to identify gear and notify its owners. During this restricted period all trap gear closure must be removed from the Closure area. If trap gear remains in this area during the closure the gear may be seized and the owners may be subject to fines, penalties and permit sanctions and revocation.

#### **Large Whale Seasonal Trap Gear Closure Map**



Right whales are a critically endangered species. They seasonally migrate into Massachusetts waters and aggregate in Cape Cod Bay to feed on zooplankton. In recent years more than 50% of the known right whale population is observed in our waters during late winter/early spring. The entanglement of whales in fixed fishing gear, particularly vertical buoy lines, is a substantial source of human-caused mortality. To reduce the risk posed by fishing gear to these whales, this closure was implemented in 2015 under the federal Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan and subsequently codified in state regulations.

For more information regarding the management of protected species, please visit our [website](#).