



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries

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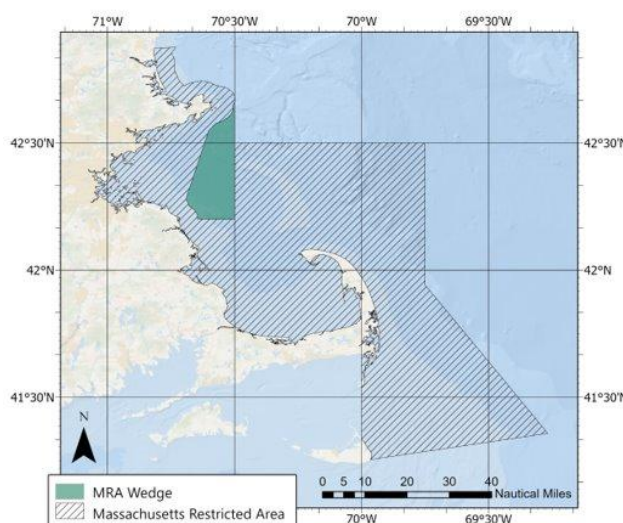
February 1, 2025

Marine Fisheries Advisory

Massachusetts Restricted Area Wedge Closure to Trap/Pot Gear Upheld and Effective February 1 Compliance Assistance Available

On January 30, 2025, the U.S. First Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that the final regulation amending the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan (Plan) to expand the boundaries of the seasonal Massachusetts Restricted Area (MRA) to include the "Wedge"—that area of federal waters in Massachusetts Bay between state waters and the federal waters within the Massachusetts Restricted Area Wedge was lawful and may be enforced. **Therefore, the Wedge is closed, effective February 1 2025, to the use of trap/pot gear (except the authorized use of on-demand gear by NOAA Fisheries) from February 1 through April 30.**

Given the timing, DMF has recommended to NOAA Fisheries to allow until March 1st for fishers to safely remove all trap/pot gear in the Wedge. When hauling trap/pot gear in the Wedge during this February, gear should be removed and not baited or reset. Affected fishers are urged to contact the NOAA Fisheries Office of Law Enforcement for compliance assistance to accommodate the removal of gear as expediently as possible. If applicable to you, please contact Kevin Swiechowicz (kevin.swiechowicz@noaa.gov) and be prepared to provide NOAA Fisheries with your plan and timeline to remove gear.



For additional information regarding compliance with Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan requirements, please contact gear liaison Robert Martin (robert.martin@noaa.gov, 617-710-6322).

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