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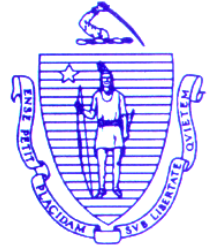
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February 18, 2015

Marine Fisheries Advisory

Notice to Whelk Harvesters and Dealers: Measuring Gauges

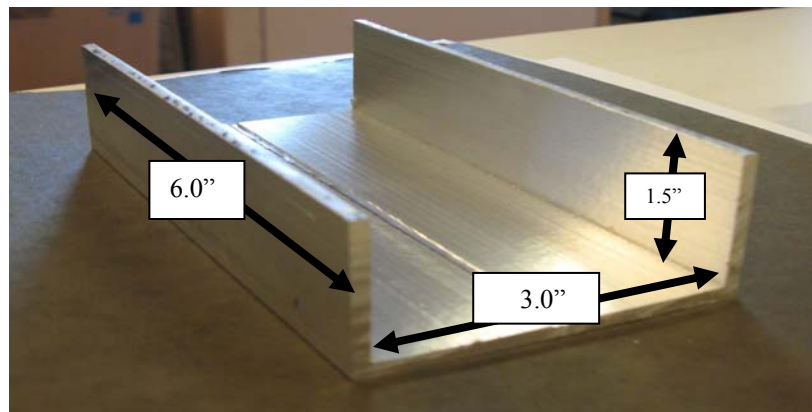
This notice is to inform members of the whelk industry that the Division of Marine Fisheries (*Marine Fisheries*) will no longer be providing measuring gauges. Rather, we are encouraging all fishermen and dealers to order their own gauges with specifications that match the gauges law enforcement officers will be using to monitor compliance with the minimum size for whelks.

For the past two years, *Marine Fisheries* has produced whelk measuring gauges and distributed them to fishermen and dealers at no cost. These “chute” gauges were developed as prototypes in 2013, at the request of industry to improve compliance with the minimum size regulation that was $2\frac{3}{4}$ " shell width. In 2013, we were fortunate to find some inexpensive off-the-shelf standard aluminum stock that had a $2\frac{3}{4}$ " gap coinciding perfectly with the minimum size.

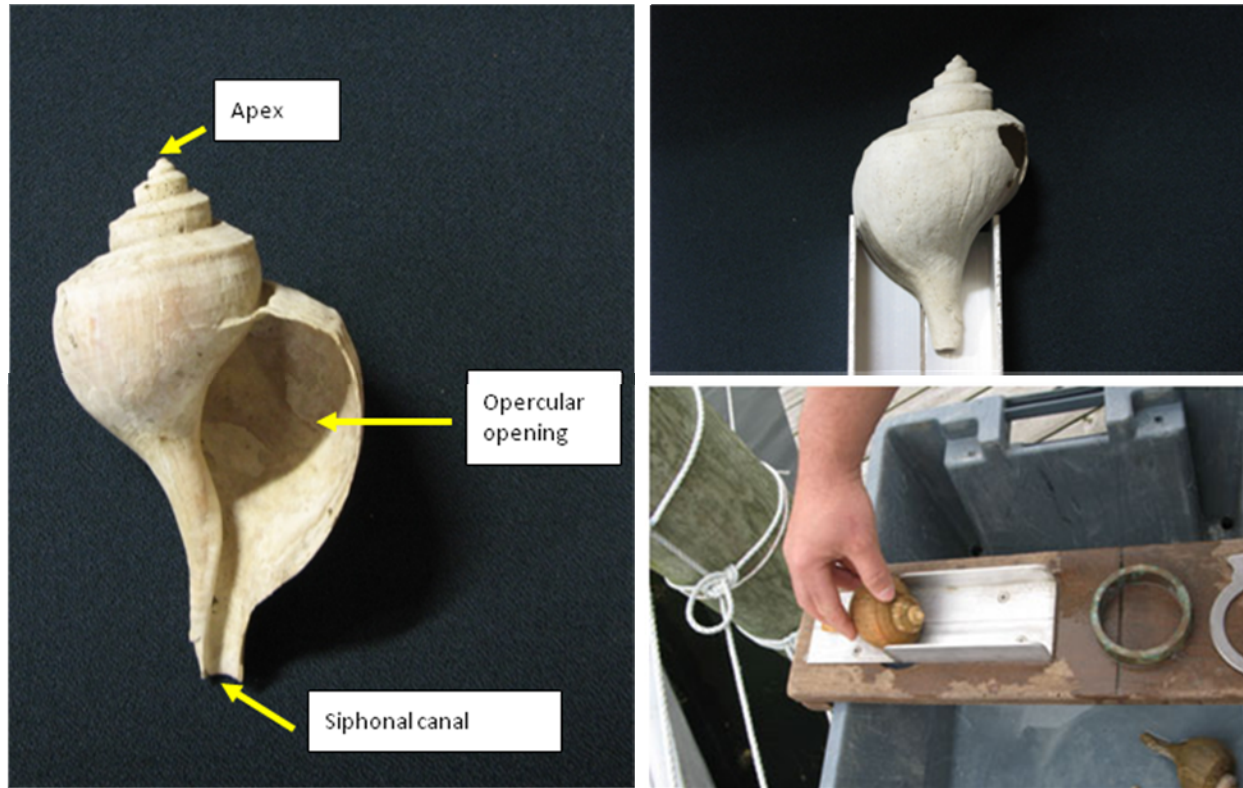
To improve conservation through reduced harvest of immature whelks, *Marine Fisheries* enacted two $\frac{1}{8}$ " increases for 2014 and 2015. Last year due to the unavailability of off-the-shelf aluminum stock with a $2\frac{7}{8}$ " gap, *Marine Fisheries* staff fabricated the devices. Industry response to the gauges issued in 2014 was mixed, and many fishermen ordered their own gauges from machine shops.

Consequently, we have decided to encourage all fishermen and dealers to order their own gauges to meet the 3" minimum size for 2015. The Massachusetts Office of Law Enforcement will be ordering gauges of certain specifications from a machine shop and officers will use these gauges with methods established in the past two years. We received much positive feedback from fishermen, dealers, and officers about the creation of a standard gauge and measuring protocol. We hope that consistency can be maintained by having industry fabricate and use similar devices.

Gauge Specifications. Officers will be using a gauge that is described as follows: an open-topped rectangular chute that is at least 6" long with two $1\frac{1}{2}$ " tall parallel rails that are 3" apart. The base of the chute is scored with a parallel center line and this line allows the user to consistently orient the whelk properly when passing the whelk through the chute. See Figure.



Use of Gauge. By regulation, compliance with the minimum size for all knobbed and channeled whelks is established by measuring the shell width with the opercular opening facing down. With the opercular opening facing down on the gauge, position the shell such that a line drawn through the shell's apex and siphonal canal would be parallel with the gauge's center line. Any whelk that passes through the chute is undersized and must be released alive. There is no tolerance for undersized whelk; all knobbed and channeled whelks must be landed whole in shell. See Figures.



With the opercular opening of the whelk facing down, any whelk that can pass through the gauge with the center of the apex and the center of the siphonal canal oriented parallel to the sides of the gauge and/or the center line of the gauge, is sublegal and must be released.