



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Division of Marine Fisheries

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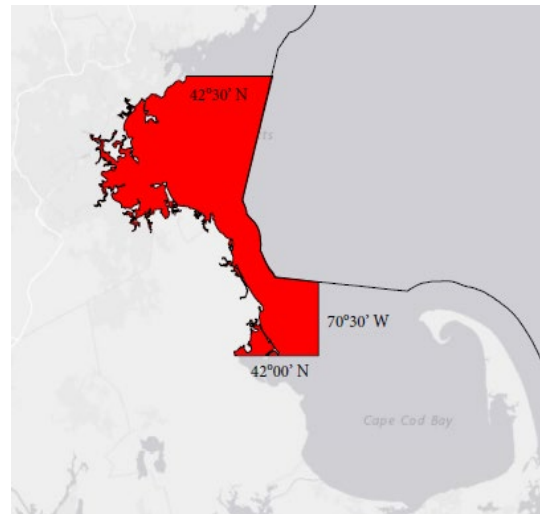
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February 19, 2021
Marine Fisheries Advisory

Public Comment Sought on Proposed Action to Temporarily Lift the State-Waters Groundfish Closure for April 2021

DMF is seeking public comment on lifting the conditional April groundfish closure for 2021. This annual closure was developed in 2019 to address allocative concerns that landings from the state waters-only groundfish fishery may impact access to federal groundfish quotas. By regulation, those state waters between 42°00'N (Plymouth) and 42°30'N (Marblehead) west of 70°30' W are closed to commercial groundfish fishing in April. However, the closure may be lifted on an annual basis if DMF projects the action will not result in an exceedance of the annual federally allocated state-waters subcomponent for regulated groundfish stocks or will not compromise federal conservation objectives.



DMF has analyzed landings data for the current fishing year (May 1 – April 30) and intends to lift the conditional April groundfish closure this year. Landings for the current fishing year are well below the federally allocated sub-components, likely driven by COVID related impacts on fishery effort last spring and summer. Accordingly, it is unlikely that an April opening will result in an exceedance of the state waters sub-components or of overall annual catch limits. Further information on this analysis may be found in DMF's February 12, 2021 [memorandum](#) to the Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission.

DMF will accept written public comment on this proposal through 5PM on Friday, March 5, 2021. Written comment may be submitted to by e-mail to marine.fish@mass.gov or by post sent to 251 Causeway Street, Suite 400, Boston, MA 02114. The Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission will consider adopting this action at their March 18, 2021 business meeting.

For more information regarding the management of marine fisheries in the Commonwealth please visit our website: www.mass.gov/marinefisheries