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MarineFisheries Advisory

**MARINEFISHERIES SEEKS PUBLIC ASSISTANCE TO
IDENTIFY HORSESHOE CRAB SPAWNING BEACHES**

The Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries (*MarineFisheries*) is seeking the public's assistance in identifying shoreline used as horseshoe crab spawning habitat. Each spring, in May and June, horseshoe crabs come ashore to lay their eggs. Weather conditions, water temperature and habitat can affect where and when the crabs gather. However, spawning generally occurs on evening high tides near the full and new moons.

Your assistance in identifying horseshoe crab spawning beaches will help *MarineFisheries* determine the relative importance of these sites and help us in managing this resource. Many scientists believe that there may be localized population declines that can be attributed to loss of spawning habitat in addition to fishing pressure.

This spring, if you notice crabs spawning, please note the location (beach, nearby street or other landmark) and contact Alison Leschen by telephone at (508) 990-2860, extension 142 or by email at alison.leschen@state.ma.us. Please note: When horseshoe crabs spawn, the female will burrow into the bottom to lay eggs in nests. Do not report coupled crabs (a female with a male attached) that are not burrowed in - the male will attach to the female crab days or weeks before spawning actually begins.