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MarineFisheries Advisory

DMF SEEKS INPUT ON PROPOSED SPRING COD CONSERVATION ZONE
Public meeting on April 8th

The Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries (*MarineFisheries*) is holding a public meeting to discuss with fishermen a Spring Cod Conservation Zone (Spring CCZ). *MarineFisheries* intends to take emergency action to prohibit recreational and commercial fishing for cod in the Spring CCZ (see map for area) during May 1 through July 15 (322 CMR 8.15). Although fishing for other species would be allowed in the Spring CCZ during this period, all cod must be returned to the water immediately and any vessels transiting the area with cod aboard must have their gear stowed. Furthermore, setting, fishing or abandoning of gillnets in the area during this period would be prohibited.

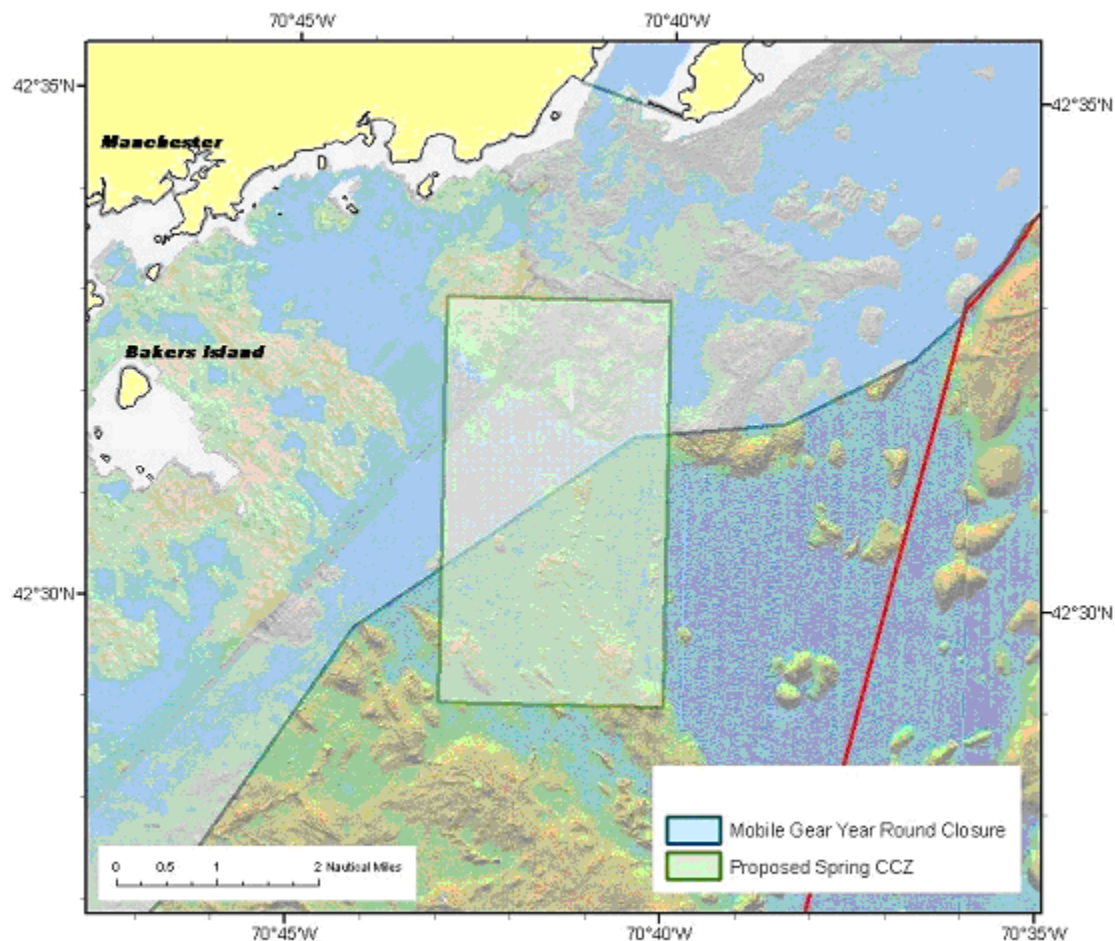


Figure 1. The Spring CCZ shall apply to all commercial and recreational fishing within the waters under the jurisdiction of the Commonwealth north of latitude 42° 29', south of latitude 42° 33', east of 70° 43' and west of 70° 40'.

Marine Fisheries plans to take this action to protect a discrete aggregation of spawning cod. Small spawning areas in the inshore Gulf of Maine historically have been extirpated. *Marine Fisheries* has observed decreasing catch rates and mean size of harvested fish taken from this area over the past several years. We believe this area cannot continue to support heavy exploitation. Note this area is already closed to commercail groundfishing during the period May – June under rolling closures (322 CMR 8.11)

The meeting will be held on April 8 th (6PM) at the Annisquam River Marine Fisheries Station (30 Emerson Ave. Gloucester).