



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Division of Marine Fisheries

(617) 626-1520 | www.mass.gov/marinefisheries



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May 13, 2025

Marine Fisheries Advisory

Commercial Trap Gear Fishery to Open and Small Vessel Speed Limit Lifted Effective Wednesday, May 14th

Effective Wednesday, May 14th 2025, all Fixed Gear Seasonal Closures – including the Commercial Trap Gear Closure, Commercial Gillnet Closure and Recreational Lobster and Crab Trap Closure – will be lifted to allow setting and fishing of fixed gear. These closures have been in place throughout the winter and early spring to protect endangered North Atlantic right whales from entanglements. Additionally, DMF will lift the small vessel speed restriction in Cape Cod Bay allowing mariners with vessels less than 65' to operate at speeds greater than 10 knots.

The decision to open the trap gear fishery is based on recent aerial and acoustic monitoring efforts, which indicate that right whales are no longer present in Massachusetts state waters. An aerial survey flight on May 13 observed no right whales in Cape Cod Bay and Massachusetts Bay. In addition, there have been no right whale acoustic detections on the Cape Cod Bay or Cape Ann near real-time buoys for several days. This follows a typical pattern of right whales departing from Massachusetts coastal waters within the first two weeks of May.

DMF greatly appreciates the cooperation and patience of all fishing industry participants and stakeholders. We are sensitive to the challenges these issues can have on fishers who are unable to plan the beginning of their trap fishing season.

For other questions, please contact DMF at marine.fish@mass.gov