



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
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MarineFisheries Advisory

Fixed-gear fishers encouraged to monitor dissolved oxygen in Cape Cod Bay following algal bloom

During the week of August 16 – 22, Massachusetts Water Resources Authority's (MWRA) water quality monitoring survey in Cape Cod Bay, conducted by Center for Coastal Studies, detected substantial amounts of *Karenia mikimotoi* in portions of Cape Cod Bay. This is the species of dinoflagellate (a type of phytoplankton, or microscopic algae) that was associated with hypoxic conditions observed in 2019 and 2020 in the southern portion of Cape Cod Bay. Unlike many of the phytoplankton species more commonly found in Cape Cod Bay, *K. mikimotoi* is adapted to low light conditions and can vertically migrate, allowing it to use the nutrient-rich bottom waters present during late summer.

Because of this bloom, we expect that dissolved oxygen (DO) conditions will start to decline. DMF will be closely monitoring the DO data for Cape Cod Bay provided by the Cape Cod Bay Study Fleet and eMolt participants to watch for declining DO. Severely hypoxic conditions (DO less than ~2 mg/L) can cause lethargy and death to bottom-dwelling organisms that are sensitive to it, particularly lobsters, crabs, and fish that may be retained in traps and unable to move away from the hypoxic conditions.

We encourage all fixed-gear fishers in Cape Cod Bay to monitor the publicly accessible data from the Study Fleet at www.mass.gov/capecodbaydo. Just click on "map in full screen" to see the most recent conditions displayed. This tool was developed to provide fishers with a means of viewing changing DO conditions to increase awareness of where low DO conditions are occurring and enabling fishers to make informed decisions about where to place their gear to hopefully avoid dead loss in their catch.

If DO conditions deteriorate, DMF will issue a follow-up to this advisory. For more information contact marine.fish@mass.gov.