



Paul J. Diodati
Director

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Division of Marine Fisheries
251 Causeway Street, Suite 400
Boston, MA 02114
(617) 626.1520
Fax (617) 626.1509



Deval Patrick
Governor
Ian Bowles
Secretary
Mary B.
Griffin
Commissioner

September 22, 2010
Marine Fisheries Advisory

**Notice to Holders of State Waters Groundfish
Permit Endorsement**
Hook Fishing LOA Available for October

The Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries (*Marine Fisheries*) will authorize additional fishing using hook-gear in October in the area of Upper Cape Cod Bay and Massachusetts Bay. This authorization is designed to allow additional cod fishing by non-federally permitted groundfish vessels using hook-gear within *Marine Fisheries*' October-November "rolling closure."

A letter of authorization (LOA) will be issued upon request to holders of a Massachusetts commercial permit with a groundfish endorsement (GE). This October exemption for authorized permit holders extends from Marblehead (south of latitude 42°30') to Plymouth (north of latitude 42°). So-called "Common Pool" and "Sector" federally-permitted vessels will not be allowed to fish for groundfish in this area during this time.

The federal Multispecies Groundfish Plan (Amendment 16) has set aside small amounts of each species and stock for non-federally permitted vessels fishing in state waters' fisheries. However, the cod set-aside is about 1.25 million pounds, and as of the end of July, less than 100,000 pounds was landed in the Commonwealth.

This LOA provides some opportunity for Massachusetts fishermen to catch and land cod within the bounds of the set-aside. Otter trawls and gillnets will not be allowed because flatfish species (winter flounder, witch flounder, and yellowtail flounder) landings are expected to be reached or exceeded within the existing time/area openings of state waters. Since cod hook-gear is unlikely to take flounders, this is the only gear being allowed. Considering ongoing protection of cod

spawning aggregations by *Marine Fisheries*, only October is being considered at this time. Cod historically aggregate in Massachusetts Bay in mid to late November to spawn

To apply for this LOA commercial fishermen must be up-to-date in their mandatory trip level reporting and possess a valid Groundfish Endorsement. Circle hooks will be required, and the 800-pound trip limit will be in effect.

As always, participants will be required to accommodate state sea samplers. Through catch reports and sea sampling we intend to learn more about cod distribution in the area as well as their spawning condition. This LOA will enable *Marine Fisheries* to determine if future exemptions in this area and/or elsewhere can be justified.

Those interested in applying for an LOA should send a letter, fax or e-mail requesting an LOA to:

Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries
251 Causeway St.
Boston MA 02114
Fax 617 626-1509
e-mail Kerry Swallow kerry.swallow@state.ma.us

All request letters must include the permit holder's name, permit number, and vessel.

For more information call 617 626-1520.