

Finfish - Definitions

Angling:

Fishing with handline or rod, with naturally or artificially baited hook.

Closed Season:

The time when fish cannot be lawfully taken.

"Coastal Waters" (Waters under the jurisdiction of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts): Include all of Mass. Bay, Cape Cod Bay, Nantucket Sound, the waters within the rise and fall of the tide and extends three miles offshore from an established baseline. It does not include the waters within or above any fishladder or dam, nor the waters above any tidal bound legally established by DEP in streams flowing into the sea.

Quota Dependent:

For quota-monitored fisheries, closing date(s) are dependent upon the fulfillment of either the state or coast-wide quotas. [Click here to view current landings of all quota-monitored species.](#)

Snagging, Snatching or Hooking:

The taking of fish not attracted by bait or artificial lure with hooks, gangs, or lures, whether baited or unbaited, in manner so as to pierce and hook a fish in any part of the body other than the mouth.

The verb **To Fish** in all of its moods and tenses is to take or attempt to take fish by any means, whether or not such method or means results in their capture.

Weir, Pound Nets or Fish Traps may be set by a person possessing written authorization to do so from the aldermen, city council or selectmen in the community of use, and also the written approval of the director of Marine Fisheries and DEP, subject to such conditions as they may impose. Such weirs, traps or pound nets must be conspicuously marked in an approved manner.

Portions of Streams flowing into coastal waters may be closed during spawning season for the purpose of protecting smelt and their spawn. Notices of such closings are posted on or near such closed areas giving the bounds thereof.

Finfish - Prohibitions

Trawling, Gillnetting, Seining, Torching and other fishing methods are illegal in certain areas at certain times of the year. Specific laws and regulations are available from the Division of Marine Fisheries, Boston.

Snagging, Snatching or Hooking of anadromous fish: including shad, smelt, white perch, striped bass, trout and salmon, but excluding alewives or river herring is strictly prohibited.

The taking of Sturgeon, Atlantic Salmon, all marine mammals, all sea turtles and the Diamond Black Terrapin is prohibited.

The sale of Billfish (except Swordfish) landed in Massachusetts is prohibited.

No vessel over 90' registered length may fish in MA waters. However, mobile gear vessels are limited to 72' with some exceptions. Please contact DMF to determine eligibility to this exception.

Vessels using nets may not fish in coastal waters with disks, rollers, or rockhoppers greater than 12" in diameter.

Mobile gear fishing in coastal waters at night is prohibited.