



**Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries
Technical Report TR-39**

Technical Report

Massachusetts Lobster Fishery Statistics for 2006

M. J. Dean

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
Department of Fish and Game
Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries**

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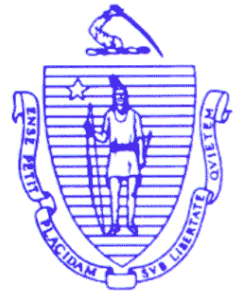
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Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Deval Patrick, Governor
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
Ian Bowles, Secretary
Department of Fisheries, Wildlife and Environmental Law Enforcement
Mary B. Griffin, Commissioner
Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries
Paul Diodati, Director

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Introduction

The commercial fishery for American lobster is the most economically important fishery conducted within the Territorial waters of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Because lobster are an abundant and important commercial species from Maine to New Jersey, the responsibility for managing this fishery is organized coast-wide by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC). The Commission's Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) has been modified many times since it was first written in 1997, but the most current revision at the time these data were collected was Addendum IX (October 2006). The Lobster FMP separates management of the fishery between seven Lobster Conservation Management Areas (LCMAs) based on regional differences in stock structure and fishery practices. The Massachusetts fishery occurs in four of these areas: LCMAs 1, 2, 3 and OC (Figure 1).

The foundation of any such fishery management plan is a comprehensive and accurate database of fishery-dependent data. The Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries (MADMF), with funding from the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), has been collecting annual reports from permitted lobster fishermen since the early 1960's. In the past, these data were used primarily for descriptive and informational purposes, and occasionally for management. However, with the emphasis on coast-wide management, state and federal management agencies, as well as the ASMFC, have come to rely on these data to protect the interests of Massachusetts' lobstermen and ensure a productive fishery in the Commonwealth.

Concerns over the ability of the resource to support rapidly expanding fishing effort prompted MADMF to cease issuing new Coastal permits in 1988 and new Offshore Trap permits in 2003. In an

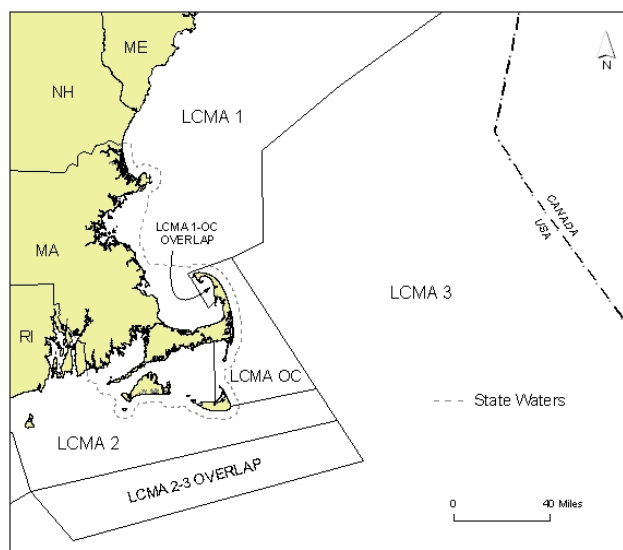


Figure 1. Lobster Conservation Management Areas (LCMAs) for the Commercial Lobster Fishery.

effort to further control fishing mortality and minimize latent fishing effort, Lobster Effort Control Plans were recently developed for LCMA OC (2003), LCMA 3 (2004) and LCMA 2 (2006). All of these plans assigned trap allocations based on individual fishing histories. Commercial fishermen operating in LCMA 1 continue to be limited by a single 800-trap limit. Fishing mortality for lobster is also controlled through minimum and maximum carapace lengths, trap escape vent minimum sizes as well as a prohibition on landing female lobsters that have previously been "V-notched" by commercial fishermen (Table 1).

This report is the fortieth annual publication of data compiled from the catch reports of permitted Massachusetts lobster fishermen. Requests for expanded information, or questions concerning this publication, should be directed to the Division's MIS & Fisheries Statistics Project in Gloucester, MA: (978) 282-0308.

Table 1. Commercial lobster fishing restrictions for 2006.

Area	Min gauge size	Max gauge size	Trap Limit	Escape vent min size	V-notch definition
LCMA 1	3 ¹ / ₄ "	5"	800	1 ¹⁵ / ₁₆ " x 5 ³ / ₄ "	zero tolerance**
LCMA 2	3 ³ / ₈ "	none	ITA* (800)	2" x 5 ³ / ₄ "	1/4" (no setal hairs)
LCMA 3	3 ⁷ / ₁₆ "	none	ITA* (2200)	2" x 5 ³ / ₄ "	1/4" (no setal hairs)
LCMA OC	3 ⁷ / ₁₆ "	none	ITA* (800)	2" x 5 ³ / ₄ "	1/4" (no setal hairs)

* Individual Trap Allocations (ITA) based on fishing history.

** In LCMA 1 it is illegal to harvest females with a V-shaped notch of any size with or without setal hairs.

Methods

Massachusetts General Law (Chapter 130, Section 33) requires all lobstermen to file an annual report of their catch by January 31 for the preceding calendar year. Commercial lobstermen receive a detailed catch report form to be filled out and submitted with their permit renewal application (Appendix A). On this form, they are asked to provide catch and effort data summarized by month and area, as well as information on gear, vessels, dealers and ports of landing. Recreational fishermen are simply asked to report their total harvest and fishing effort (maximum traps fished and/or total hours diving) for the previous year directly on their permit renewal form. Catch reports are visually screened upon receipt and incomplete or improperly filled-out forms are returned. Completed reports are entered into an Oracle database and the original paper forms are kept on file at the Gloucester office. As the data enters the database, it is validated against a set of quality control criteria by the data entry software. In addition, the data is once again reviewed for errors prior to the production of this report.

While fisherman catch reports are the primary source of the data presented in this report, some elements, such as price, value and data validity information come from the Atlantic Coast Cooperative Statistics Program's (ACCSP) Standard Atlantic Fishery Information System (SAFIS) dealer reporting database.

Most of the data in this publication are presented either by permit type or by reporting area. Area data refer to the Division's Statistical Reporting Areas (Figure 2), which conform to the National Marine Fisheries Service reporting areas. Reporting areas 1 through 14 are considered "Territorial" areas and include all waters under the jurisdiction of the Commonwealth. Reporting areas 15 through 25 are considered "Non-Territorial" areas, meaning they lie outside the State Waters. For purposes of stock determination and assessment, reporting areas 1-7 and 19-21 are considered part of the Gulf of Maine stock unit; reporting areas 9, 11, 17, 18 and 22-25 are considered part of the Georges Bank stock unit; and reporting areas 10 and 12-16 are considered part of the Southern New England stock unit.

In keeping with Division policy, some of the data are masked or combined to protect the confidentiality of the individual submitting the report. Specifically, any grouping of data that represents less than three individuals is not shown.

When fishermen reported the number of lobsters harvested, rather than weight, a conversion factor of 1.53 pounds per lobster was used to calculate landings. This figure is based on the 2006 state-wide average lobster size observed on commercial trap sampling trips conducted by the Division's Coastal Lobster Investigations Project.

Data presented in this publication are based on catch reports actually received as of December 2009. Late reports received beyond this point are not represented here but will be entered into our databases and accounted for in future publications.

Results and Discussion

Permits issued and reporting status. The Division of Marine Fisheries issues five types of lobster permits:

Coastal Commercial: Allows the holder to harvest lobster anywhere, most importantly inside territorial waters.

Offshore Commercial: Allows the holder to harvest lobster outside territorial waters only.

Offshore Commercial (Non-trap): Same as Offshore Permit, except the permit holder is restricted to non-trap gear types. This permit type was created for the 2004 fishing year. Prior to 2004, there was only one type of offshore permit, regardless of gear type.

Seasonal Commercial: Allows the holder, if he or she is a student, to harvest lobster anywhere, but with a maximum of 25 traps and only during the months of June - September.

Recreational: Allows the holder to harvest lobster anywhere using SCUBA gear, a maximum of 10 traps, or a combination of both. The catch may not be sold.

A total of 12,862 lobster permits were issued in 2006: 2,035 commercial and 10,926 recreational (Table 2). Of the commercial permits issued, 1,401 were coastal permits, a 2 percent decline over the previous year. This represents a 31 percent decline since a moratorium on new coastal permits was declared in 1988. The number of offshore permits issued decreased by 1 percent, while the number of seasonal permits increased by 8 percent.

As of December 2009, 65 permitted commercial lobstermen (3 percent) failed to file a 2006 catch report with the Division. Of the commercial fishermen who did report, 35 percent or 682 individuals

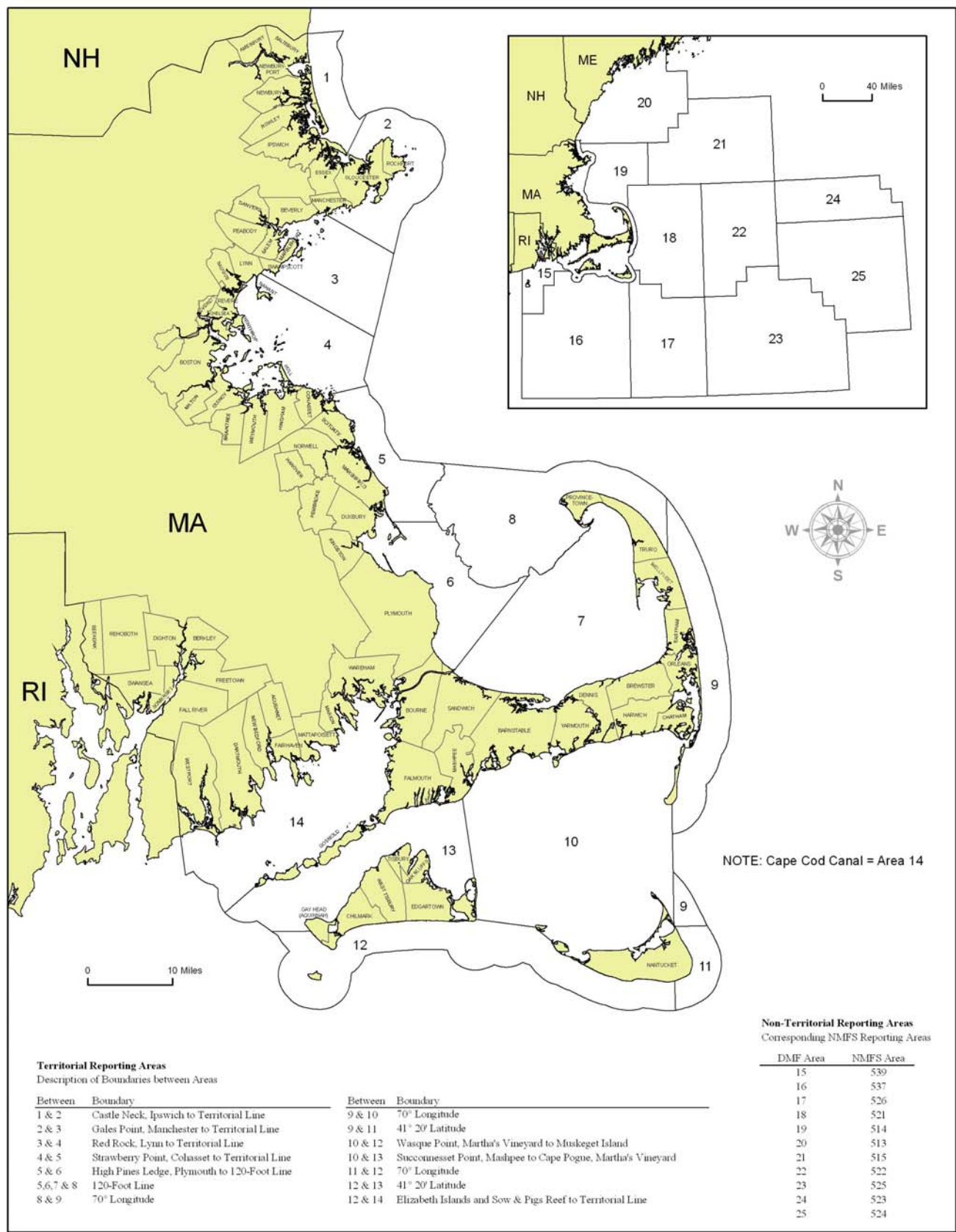


Figure 2. Map of DMF Statistical Reporting Areas: Areas 1-14 are Territorial Areas; areas 15-25 are Non-Territorial.

Table 2. Permit information for the Massachusetts lobster fishery, 2002-2006

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Coastal Permits					
Issued	1,531	1,504	1,464	1,428	1,401
Fished	1,086	1,044	983	945	913
Did Not Fish	422	433	450	451	461
Not Reporting	23	27	31	32	27
Offshore Permits					
Issued	555	553	346	316	282
Fished	376	381	203	193	168
Did Not Fish	140	142	118	97	97
Not Reporting	39	30	25	26	17
Offshore Non-Trap Permits					
Issued			202	226	253
Fished			129	131	130
Did Not Fish			54	71	102
Not Reporting			19	24	21
Seasonal (Student) Permits					
Issued	98	104	100	92	99
Fished	57	55	51	47	54
Did Not Fish	16	15	15	21	22
Not Reporting	25	34	34	24	23
Recreational Permits					
Issued	11,954	11,395	11,112	10,855	10,926
Fished	6,279	5,921	5,803	5,731	5,832
Did Not Fish	2,741	2,691	2,501	2,445	2,376
Not Reporting	2,934	2,783	2,808	2,679	2,718

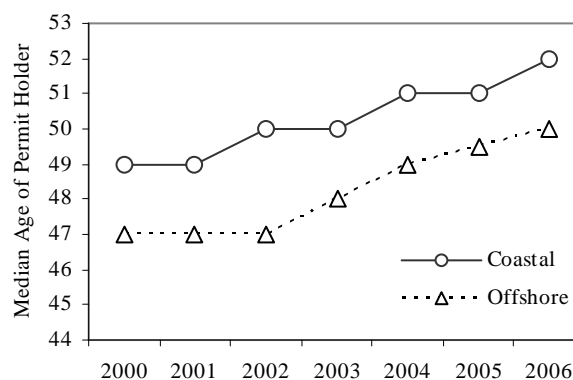
claimed they did not fish for lobster in 2006.

Recreational permits issued declined in 2006 by 1 percent. Compared to commercial permit holders, substantially more recreational fishermen failed to report at 25 percent; However, an annual reporting rate of 75 percent in the recreational fishery is not unusual. Seventy-one percent of the recreational permit holders that submitted catch reports declared that they fished for lobster in 2006.

Permit fees collected in 2006 totaled \$979,025: \$538,785 for commercial permits and \$440,240 for recreational permits. The cost of Massachusetts lobster permits remained at \$260 for coastal or offshore permits (\$520 for non-residents), \$65 for seasonal permits (\$130 for non-residents) and \$40 for recreational permits (\$60 for non-residents). The last increase in permit fees was in 1989.

The median age of 2006 commercial lobster permit holders was 52 for coastal permits and 50 for

offshore permits. This represents a 3-year increase over the past 5 years for both permit types, indicating a lack of younger fishermen entering the fishery. However, the median age of seasonal permit holders has remained steady at 16 over the past 5 years.

**Figure 3.** Median age of commercial lobster permit holders by permit type, 2000-2006.

Commercial Catch and Value. Massachusetts commercial lobstermen reported landing 12.2 million pounds of lobster in 2006, a 7 percent increase from 2005 (Table 3). The state-wide landings-weighted average ex-vessel price was \$4.79, a 5 percent decrease from 2005. Multiplying these 2 figures together provides an estimated commercial catch value of \$58.2 million, a 2 percent increase from 2005. This represents the highest value of commercial lobster landings since 1999 (Figure 4).

The ex-vessel lobster price followed a seasonal trend similar to prior years: prices increased sharply from the beginning of the year to a peak in March, then fell steadily throughout the summer to a low in early December (Figure 5). The only notable difference in 2006 was a lack of a price increase in the last few weeks of the year. In most years, a sharp rise in price typically starts in December, right after the lows of the year. Once again, the highest average prices were seen in Cape Cod, Nantucket &

Martha's Vineyard.

Just under 60 percent of the lobster landed in Massachusetts were taken from Territorial Waters. The Territorial fishery is predominantly a trap-fishery, with over 99 percent of the landings coming from traps (Table 4). In contrast, the Non-Territorial fishery landed 77 percent of its catch from traps, with the remainder coming from bottom trawls and gillnets. A small commercial dive fishery persists in Massachusetts, with only 7 permit holders operating in Territorial Waters.

A total of 55 coastal cities and towns were listed as homeports by active commercial lobstermen in 2006 (Table 5). The top 3 ports, in terms of total landings, were Gloucester, Sandwich and Westport, in that order. Gloucester alone supported 177 active commercial lobstermen, who reported landing 1.5 million pounds with over 64 thousand traps.

Table 3. Massachusetts commercial lobster landings and estimated value of landings for 2002-2006. Value is estimated by multiplying total landings by the state-wide average ex-vessel price per pound.

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Total landings (lbs)	13,776,018	11,429,379	11,785,505	11,399,893	12,154,624
Average price / lb	\$3.72	\$4.36	\$4.50	\$5.02	\$4.79
Total estimated value	\$51,246,785	\$49,832,092	\$53,034,772	\$57,227,464	\$58,220,648

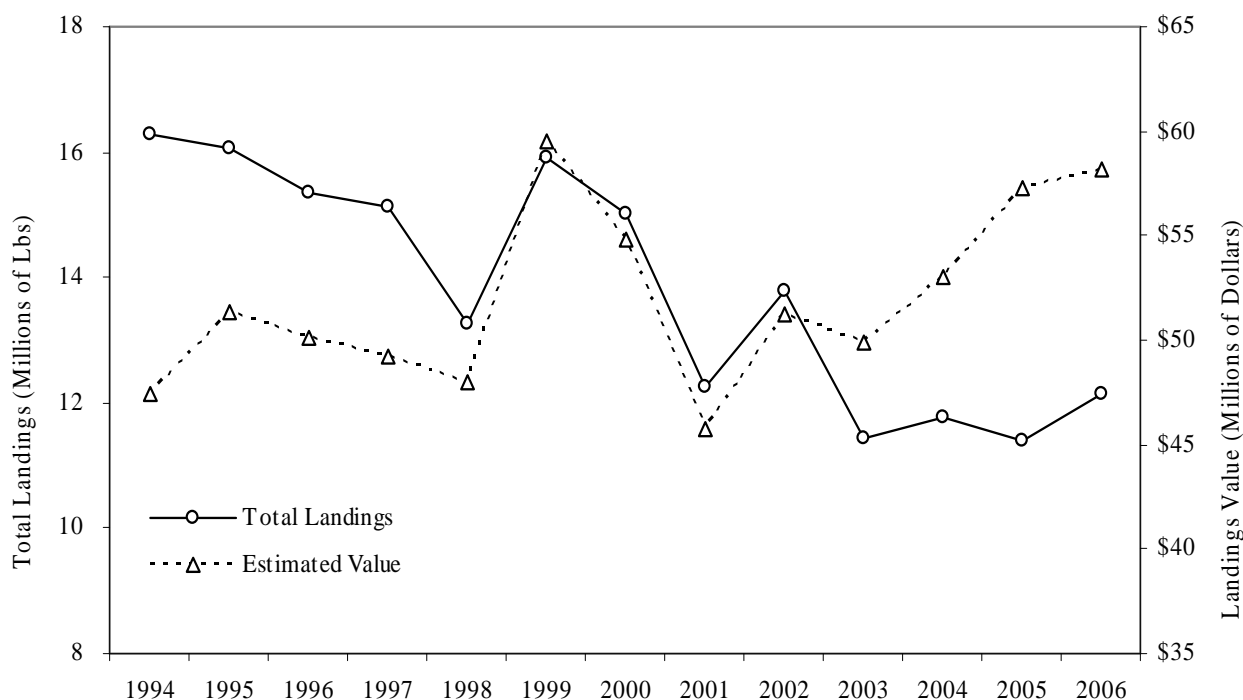


Figure 4. Total commercial lobster landings and estimated value for 1994-2006.

Table 4. 2006 active commercial lobster permits and landings by gear type and area.

	Territorial Areas		Non-Territorial Areas		All Areas	
	Permits*	Landings (lbs)	Permits*	Landings (lbs)	Permits*	Landings (lbs)
Dive	7	12,008			7	12,008
Gillnet	10	40,542	53	181,777	58	222,318
Trap	929	7,127,784	199	3,833,410	975	10,961,193
Trawl	9	3,573	238	955,531	247	959,104
Total	944	7,183,906	478	4,970,717	1,265	12,154,624

* permit totals may not equal the sum of the row or column because a permit holder may fish multiple gear types or in multiple areas.

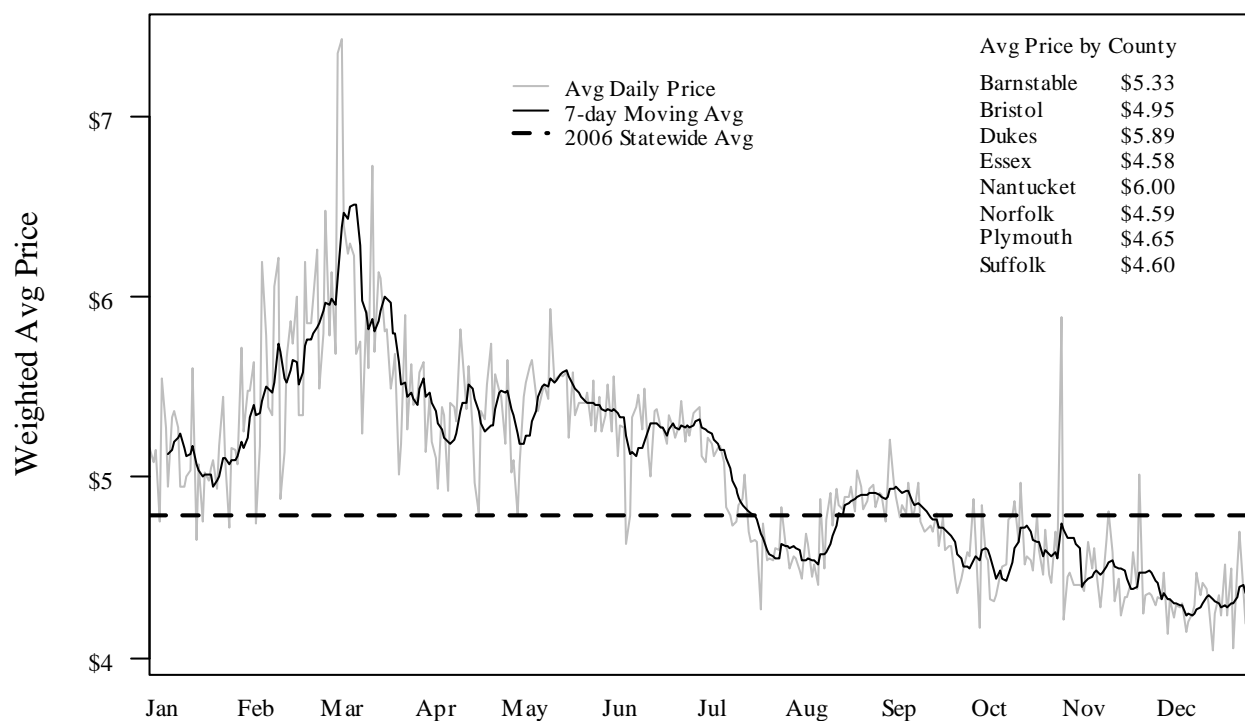


Figure 5. 2006 weighted ex-vessel price from the SAFIS dealer reporting database.

Table 5. Number of active commercial lobstermen, lobster landings and traps fished by homeport for 2006 (does not include seasonal permits). Homeport data is taken from vessel information on the permit applications. In cases where no vessel or homeport was specified, port of landing was used. Catch data includes all reported landings, regardless of gear type, while effort data represents only trap effort. Shaded areas denote towns which rank in the top 10 for either number of fishermen, total catch, or total effort. Some cities and towns are combined to protect the confidentiality of the data.

City / Town	Fishermen		Catch (Pounds)			Effort *		
	Number	Rank	Territorial	Non-Territorial	Total	Rank	Traps	Rank
Barnstable-Yarmouth	7	34	25,648	252,657	278,305	15	3,901	28
Beverly	37	10	477,609	126,376	603,985	7	20,051	6
Boston	48	6	315,828	421,055	736,883	4	18,587	7
Bourne	3	45	3,745	0	3,745	45	525	45
Chatham	37	10	153,200	325,773	478,973	9	9,056	17
Chilmark	14	24	30,573	29,243	59,816	30	3,688	29
Cohasset	24	15	284,071	53,966	338,038	13	13,060	11
Danvers	9	31	65,412	0	65,412	27	3,345	30
Dartmouth	10	28	23,271	4,180	27,450	37	1,827	37
Dennis	13	25	39,633	0	39,633	35	4,151	25
Duxbury-Kingston	7	34	17,922	33	17,955	42	1,327	41
Fairhaven	30	12	109,839	95,918	205,758	20	10,650	12
Falmouth-Gosnold	8	33	5,275	20,152	25,427	39	656	44
Gloucester	179	1	928,403	765,400	1,693,803	1	61,478	1
Harwich	6	37	3,039	45,991	49,029	34	1,340	40
Hingham	17	21	214,451	13,696	228,146	17	8,766	18
Hull	16	22	248,743	40,590	289,333	14	9,210	16
Ipswich-Essex-Rowley	11	26	20,895	0	20,895	40	2,146	35
Manchester	24	15	191,249	2,278	193,528	21	7,960	19
Marblehead	41	8	304,696	51,821	356,517	12	17,261	8
Marion	6	37	16,769	42,165	58,934	31	3,332	31
Marshfield	52	5	439,690	123,147	562,837	8	26,485	3
Mattapoisett	11	26	69,474	21,254	90,729	25	5,066	23
Nahant	16	22	266,238	10,236	276,474	16	9,560	14
Nantucket	6	37	23,015	26,829	49,844	33	1,742	38
New Bedford	108	2	53,869	380,288	434,156	10	5,607	22
Newburyport-Amesbury	18	20	54,384	55,052	109,437	24	4,777	24
Orleans-Eastham	23	17	202,589	6,359	208,948	19	7,686	20
Plymouth	71	3	654,630	34,046	688,677	5	34,285	2
Provincetown	30	12	222,985	3,827	226,812	18	9,450	15
Quincy	5	43	26,896	0	26,896	38	1,541	39
Rockport	66	4	570,639	106,844	677,483	6	25,043	4
Salem	6	37	36,352	0	36,352	36	1,962	36
Salisbury	9	31	18,368	545	18,913	41	2,725	33
Sandwich	39	9	255,471	607,677	863,148	2	23,710	5
Saugus-Lynn	20	19	162,673	9,091	171,764	22	10,231	13
Scituate	46	7	228,552	166,586	395,138	11	15,484	9
Swampscott	22	18	127,733	9,198	136,930	23	7,631	21
Tisbury-Edgartown	7	34	8,879	3,665	12,544	43	1,128	42
Truro	10	28	61,943	1,040	62,983	28	3,990	27
Wareham	6	37	11,867	0	11,867	44	797	43
Wellfleet	4	44	62,327	0	62,327	29	2,580	34
Westport-Fall River	25	14	37,223	793,261	830,484	3	14,900	10
Weymouth	6	37	40,699	44,599	85,298	26	4,139	26
Winthrop	10	28	58,755	0	58,755	32	2,975	32
Statewide Total	1,163		7,175,520	4,694,837	11,870,358		425,811	
Out Of State	48		0	275,655	275,655		1,575	

* The number of "Traps" for each city/town represents the sum of each individual's maximum traps fished for the year.

Territorial landings by commercial lobstermen showed a distinct seasonal trend (Figure 6; Table 6). Landings increased steadily from a low of 37,027 pounds in February to a high of 1,475,440 pounds in September and then dropped off again to 397,457 pounds in December. Commercial landings from Non-Territorial waters showed a slightly different seasonal trend, with the low in April and the peak in November. These annual patterns in Territorial and Non-Territorial landings are similar to previous years.

The greatest harvest of lobster from Territorial waters came from the Cape Ann vicinity (Statistical Reporting Area 2), where approximately 18 percent of the state's Territorial harvest was caught (Figures 7 and 8; Table 7). Reporting Areas 4, 3 and 5 had the next highest Territorial landings, respectively, with over 82 percent of the Territorial harvest coming from areas north of Cape Cod (Statistical Re-

porting Areas 1-7). In all, Territorial landings increased by 11 percent from 2005.

Reporting area 19 saw the highest Non-Territorial landings, which were dominated by Coastal permit holders. Offshore permit holders, which are not permitted to harvest lobsters from Territorial waters, had their highest landings from Georges Bank (reporting areas 25, 22 and 23 in decreasing order).

Some misreporting has occurred in the past due to lobstermen reporting by Lobster Conservation Management Area (Figure 1) as opposed to Statistical Reporting Area (Figure 2), thereby artificially inflating landings in Reporting Areas 1, 2 and 3. However, we feel this problem has been minimized since 2002, due to a redesigned catch report form and visual screening of effort data prior to data entry.

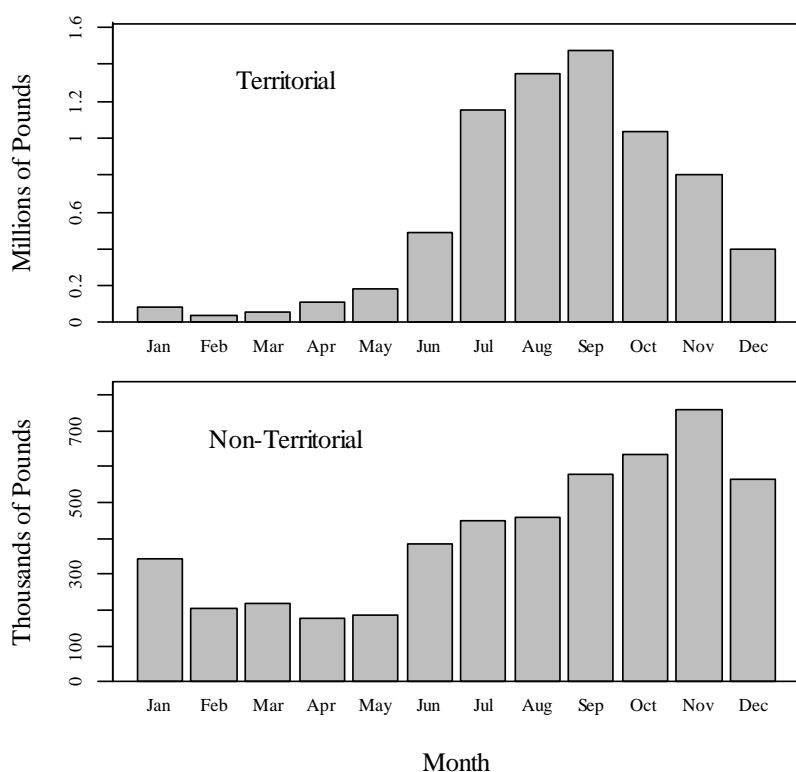


Table 6. 2006 commercial lobster landings by month for territorial and non-territorial areas

Month	Territorial	Non-Territorial
January	87,016	343,381
February	37,027	203,748
March	54,396	219,764
April	109,976	178,154
May	185,403	186,633
June	489,237	385,161
July	1,153,470	450,496
August	1,349,784	459,287
September	1,475,440	580,064
October	1,039,216	637,217
November	805,484	760,938
December	397,457	565,875
Total	7,183,906	4,970,717

Figure 6. 2006 commercial lobster landings by month for territorial and non-territorial areas

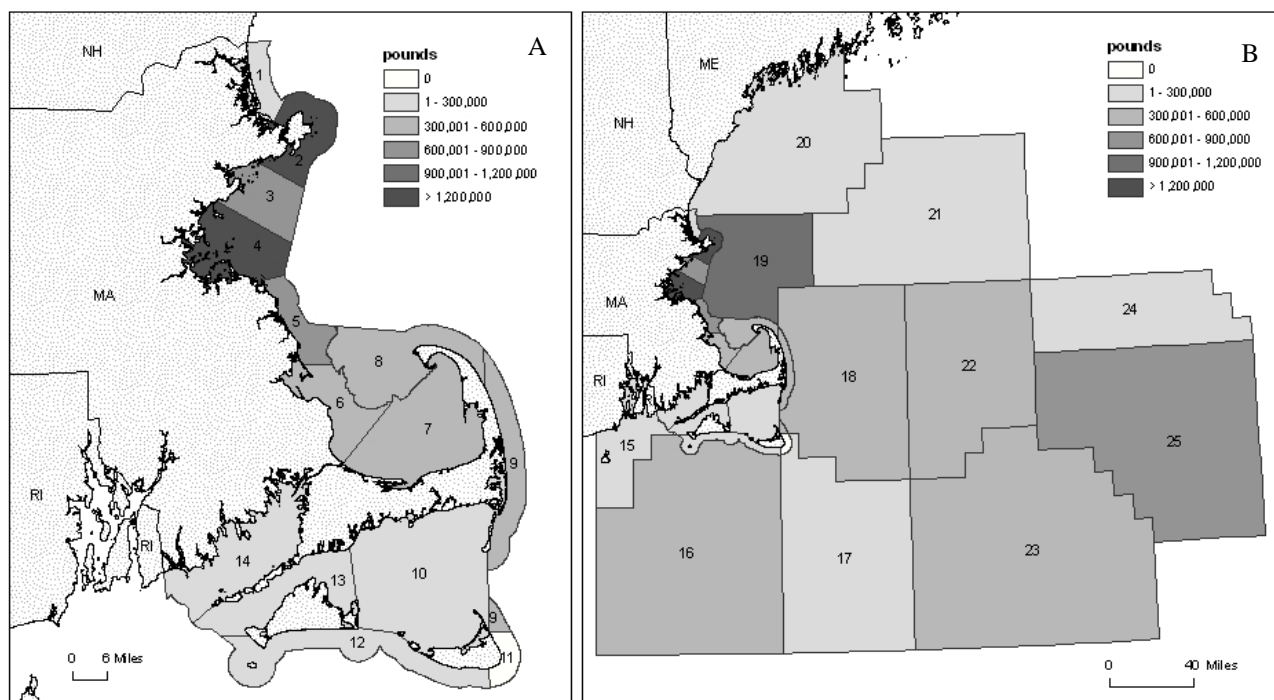


Figure 7. 2006 total commercial lobster landings from all permit types by statistical reporting area

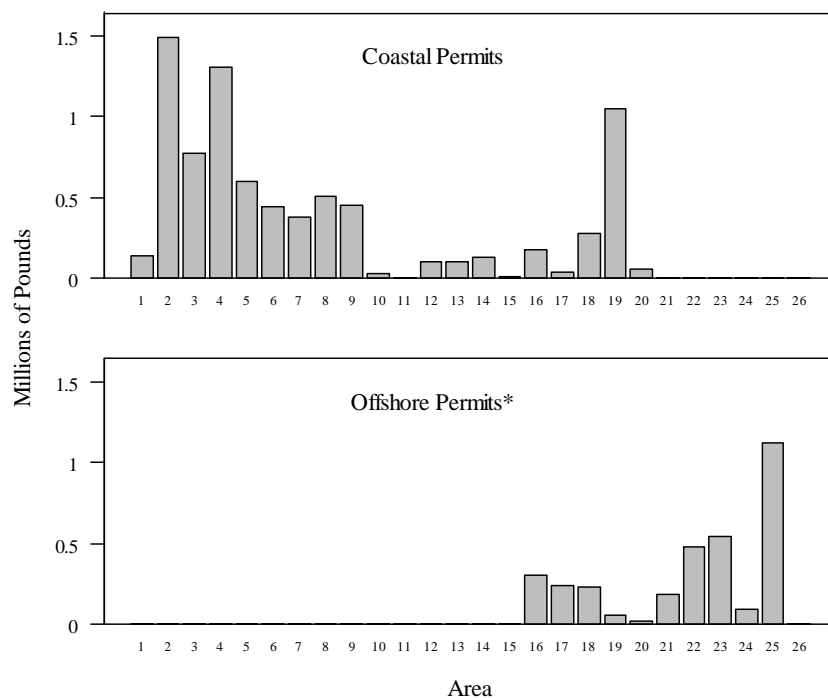


Figure 8. 2006 Commercial lobster landings by permit type and area. All offshore permit types were combined for this figure.

Table 7. 2006 Commercial lobster landings by permit type and area.

Area	Coastal	Offshore*
1	245,537	0
2	1,631,222	0
3	844,793	0
4	1,476,591	0
5	762,756	0
6	558,288	0
7	404,688	0
8	436,958	0
9	429,242	0
10	21,699	0
11	0	0
12	98,055	0
13	119,478	0
14	146,898	0
15	37,659	10,327
16	204,784	347,888
17	22,299	216,878
18	312,563	323,234
19	1,050,022	77,013
20	44,303	17,128
21	6,608	284,086
22	0	487,145
23	227	478,447
24	0	163,600
25	0	882,963
26 †	0	3,319
Total	8,854,669	3,292,028

† Area 26 includes any landings from outside the MA Statistical Reporting Areas

Commercial Effort and Catch rates. *Commercial lobster fishing effort is not collected for trawl, gillnet or dive gear types, therefore this section only pertains to the trap fishery.*

Commercial fishermen reported using a total of 428,440 traps to fish for lobster in 2006, a level very similar to the previous year (Table 8). While the total traps fished is a useful metric of the overall size of fishery, a more direct measure of fishing effort is the number of times those traps were hauled (trap-hauls). The total number of trap-trips and trap-hauls increased by 3 and 4 percent, respectively, indicating that while fishermen are using a similar number of traps as last year, they are tending them more frequently.

The average catch per trap-haul for Massachusetts commercial lobstermen in 2006 was 0.710 pounds, a 4 percent increase from 2005. Since the number of days for which traps are set (set-over-days) can influence the catch rate, it is useful to calculate the average catch rate with set-over-day factored into the effort. The average catch per unit of effort (CPUE = pounds per [trap-haul] x [set-over-day]) for coastal and offshore lobstermen were fairly similar in 2006, as compared to a decade before when offshore lobstermen experienced catch rates nearly double that of their coastal counterparts (Figure 9). The 2006 CPUE for offshore trap fishermen was the lowest on record.

Catch rates also followed a distinct annual trend (Figure 10). Offshore lobstermen experienced their lowest catch rates in March and their highest in November. Average catch rates for Coastal permit holders hit their low in March and high in September. Although offshore lobstermen had higher catch rates for most of the year, coastal permit holders were more productive in August and September. This general annual pattern is similar to previous years.

Within Territorial waters, the highest catch rates occurred in areas 9 (Outer Cape Cod), 10 (Nantucket Sound) and 8 (Cape Cod Bay) (Figures 11 and 12). The lowest catch rates for Territorial waters occurred in areas 14 (Buzzards Bay), 12 (South of Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket) and 13 (Vineyard Sound). In Non-Territorial waters, the highest catch rates occurred in the vicinity of Georges Bank (areas 23 and 25) and area 21 (offshore Gulf of Maine). Area 15, directly off the coast of Rhode Island, had the lowest catch rates for Non-Territorial waters. No traps were fished in areas 11 or 24 in 2006, therefore no catch rate information is available for these areas. While the overall catch rates experienced in Non-Territorial waters higher than in Territorial waters, they were also more variable, as is indicated by the width of the box-and-whisker plots in Figure 12.

Table 8. Reported catch and effort for the commercial lobster trap fishery and calculated annual average catch rates for 2002-2006.

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Trap landings (lbs)	12,835,126	10,305,809	10,659,221	10,169,491	10,960,509
Trap trips	102,354	96,097	92,760	86,353	89,075
Traps fished	508,091	480,484	449,299	427,837	428,440
Trap-hauls	17,577,046	16,406,678	15,811,194	14,895,896	15,427,928
Lbs / trip	125	107	115	118	123
Lbs / trap	25.3	21.4	23.7	23.8	25.6
Lbs / trap-haul	0.730	0.628	0.674	0.683	0.710
Lbs / trap-haul*set-over-day	0.161	0.139	0.149	0.139	0.143

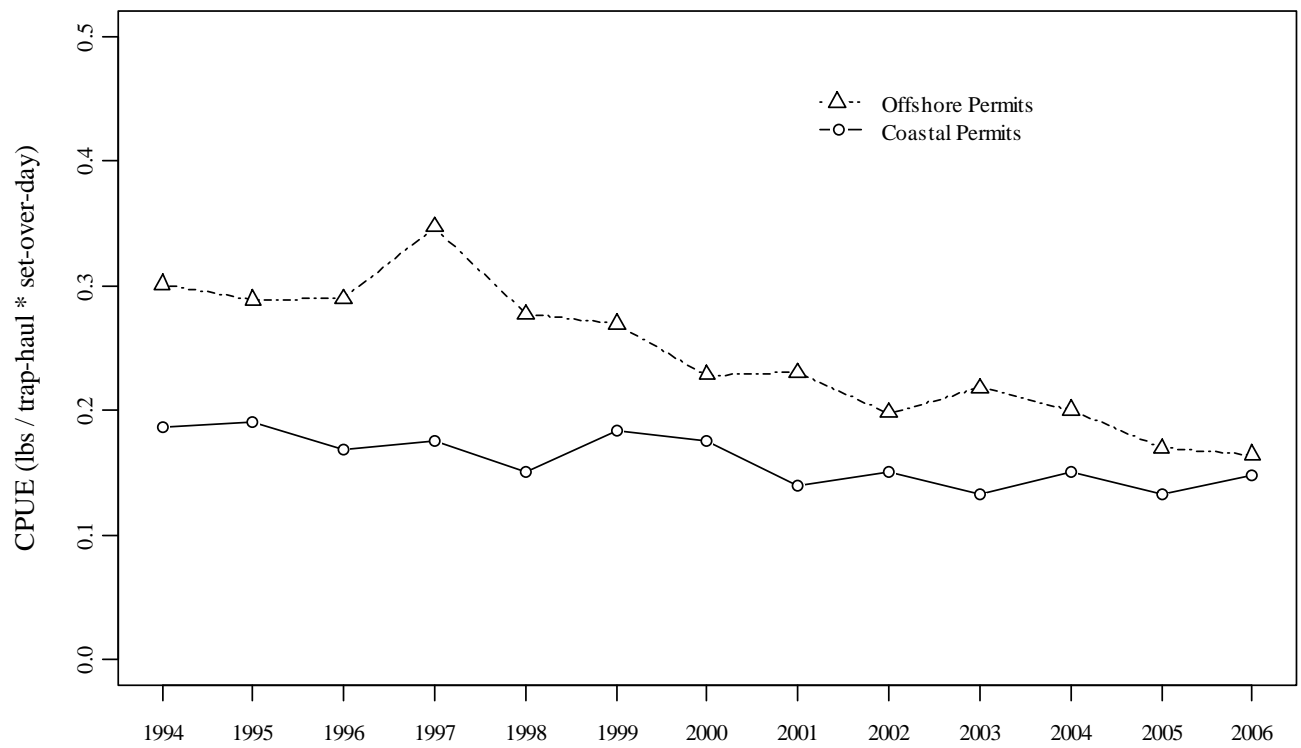


Figure 9. Average catch per unit of effort (pounds per trap-haul * set-over-day) for coastal and offshore permits for

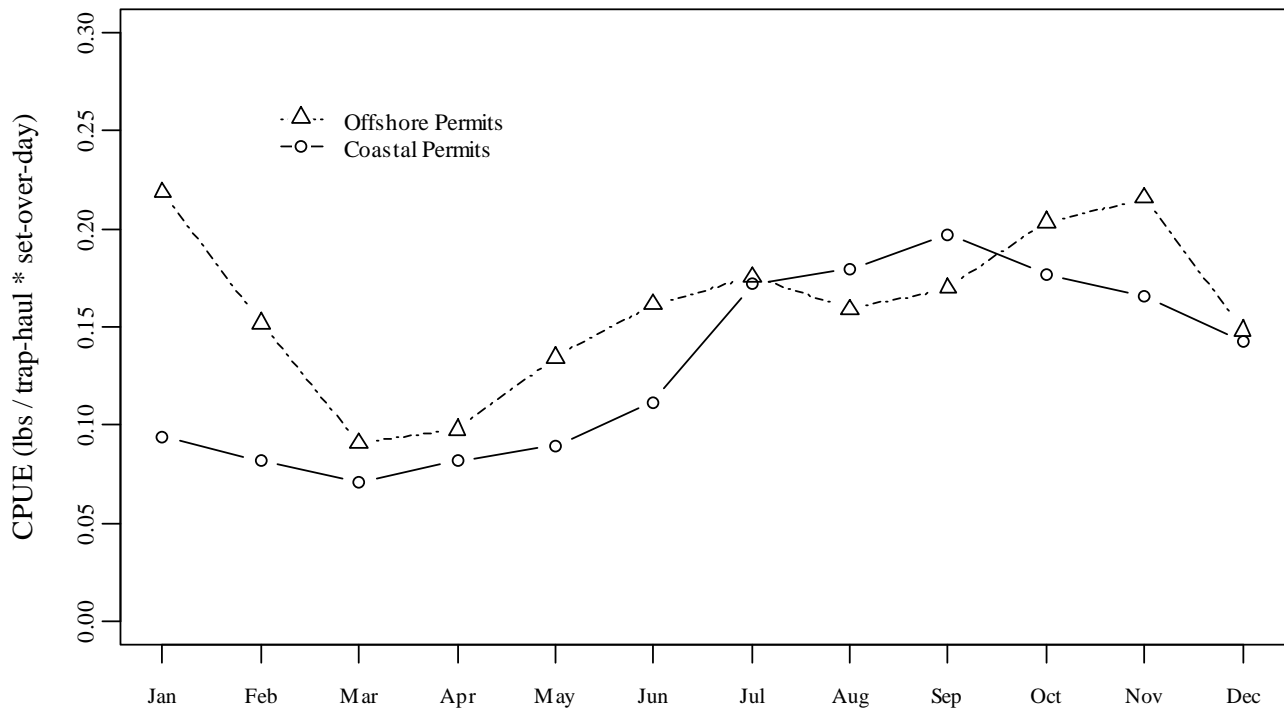


Figure 10. Average catch per unit of effort (pounds per trap-haul * set-over-day) for coastal and offshore permits by month in 2006.

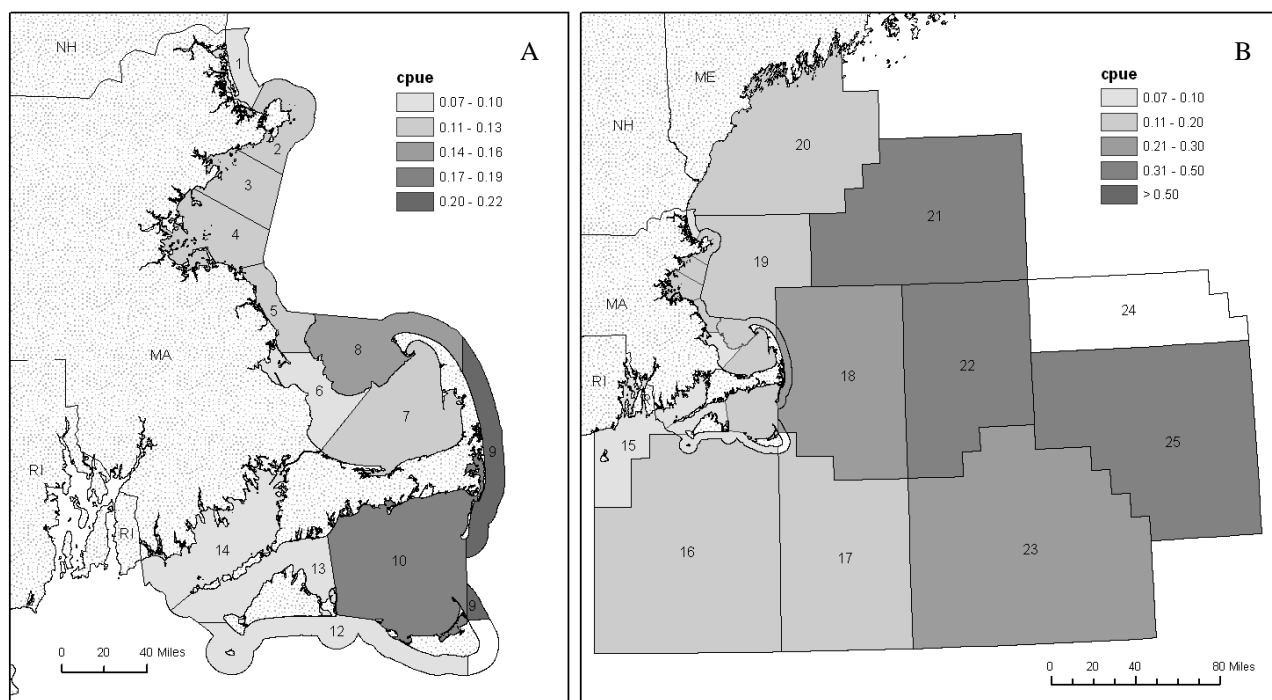


Figure 11. 2006 median catch per unit of effort (pounds per trap-haul * set-over-day) for all license types by area fished (A - territorial areas; B- non-territorial areas).

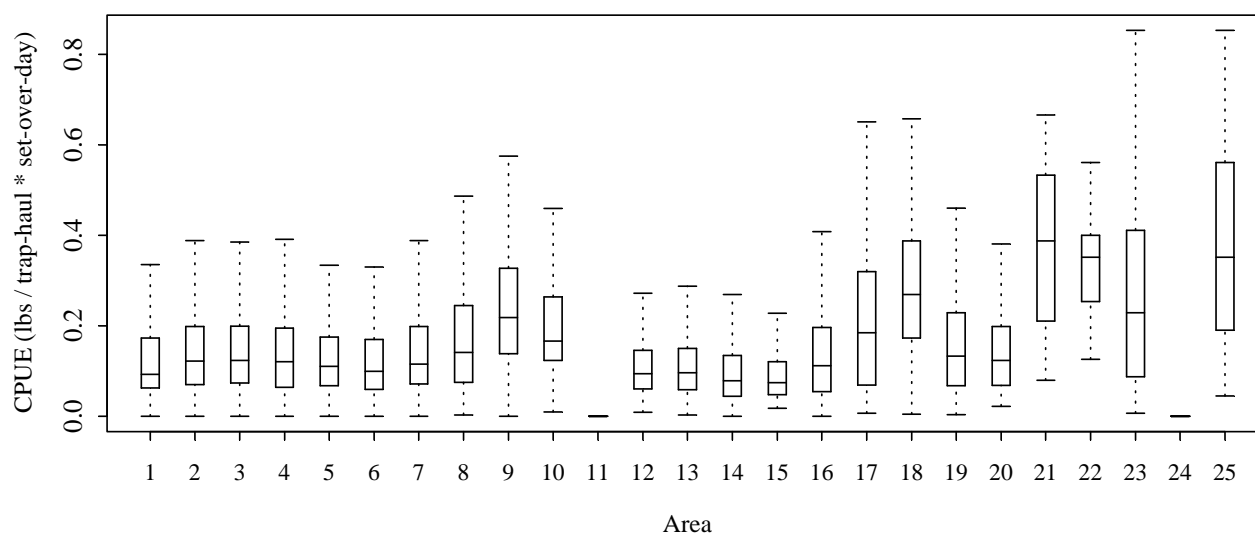


Figure 12. 2006 catch per unit of effort (pounds per trap-haul * set-over-day) for all license types by area fished. The center line of each box represents the median value for that area. The box represents 50% of the observed values, while the "whiskers" show the minimum and maximum values; outliers are not shown.

Recreational Catch and Effort. Recreational lobstermen reported landing 188,641 lobsters in 2006, a 3 percent decrease from 2005 (Figure 13). Although recreational landings are reported in numbers of lobsters harvested, a rough estimate of total pounds harvested can be made by multiplying by an average size of 1.53 pounds per lobster. Therefore, estimated recreational landings of 288,621 pounds represents approximately 2 percent of the total commercial landings (Table 9).

The total number of recreational traps-fished increased by 3 percent to 26,224 and the number of hours diving decreased by 7 percent to 41,224 (Figure 14). For those that reported fishing, the av-

erage number traps fished was 7.0 traps, while the average total number of hours diving for lobster for the year was 15.2 hours.

Table 9. Reported catch and effort information for 2006 Massachusetts recreational lobster fishery

	Diver	Diver/Pot	Potman	Total
Permits Reporting	2,931	3,433	4,564	10,928
Traps Fished		7,733	18,491	26,224
Hours Diving	20,293	20,931		41,224
Number of Lobsters	23,102	63,268	102,271	188,641
Pounds of Lobster *	35,346	96,800	156,475	288,621

* estimated using average lobster size of 1.53 pounds

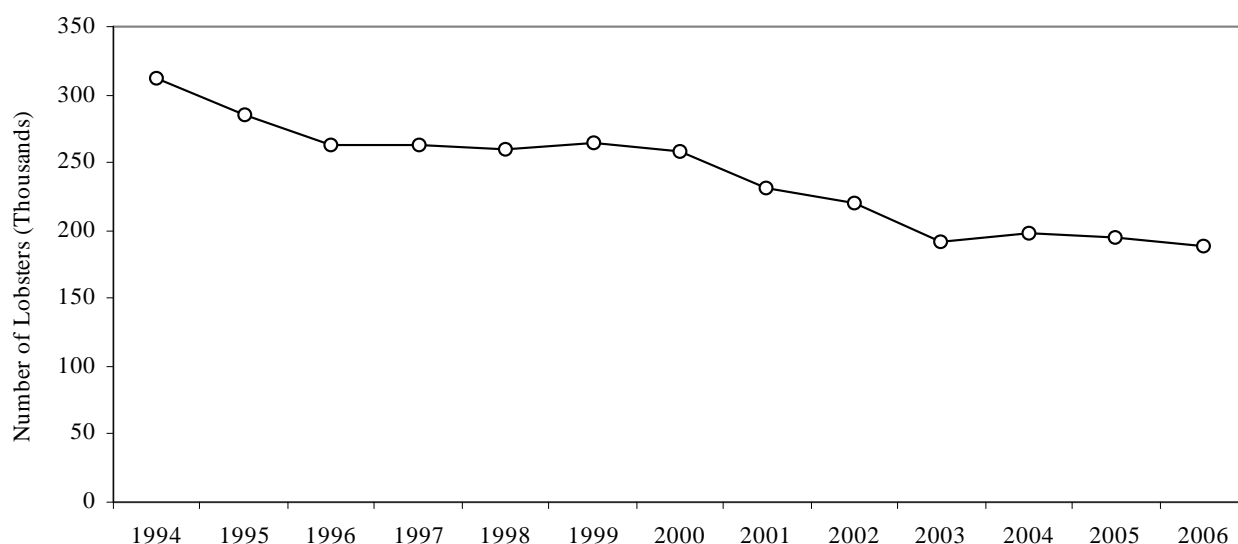


Figure 13. Recreational lobster landings for 1994-2006.

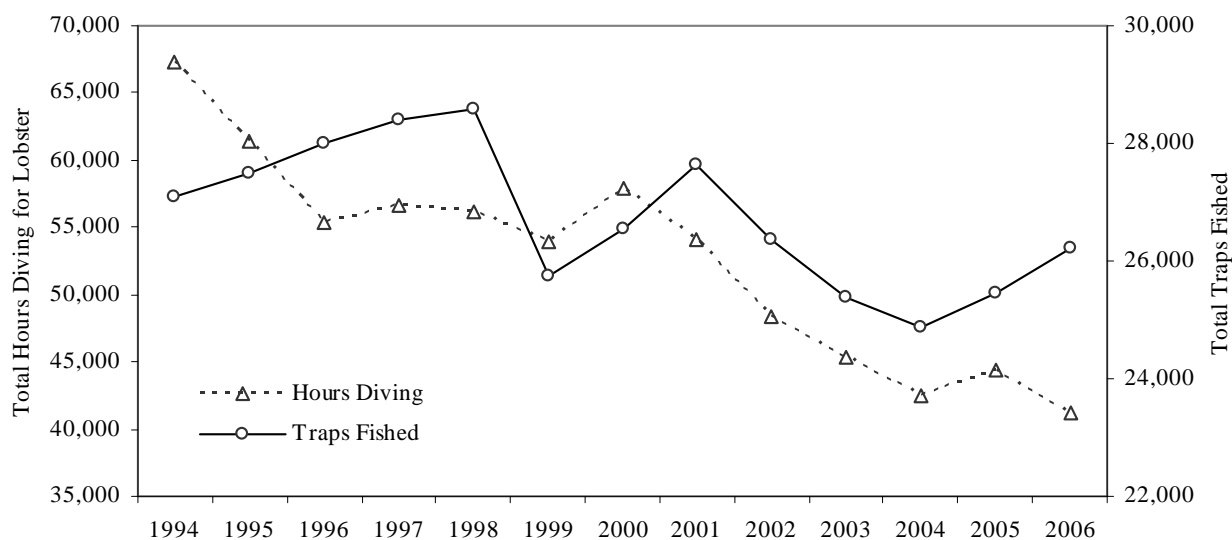


Figure 14. Total recreational lobster fishing effort for 1994-2006.

Fishery Infrastructure. Commercial fishermen reported using a total of 1,463 vessels to fish for lobster in 2006, with a total fleet value of \$68.2 million (Table 10). The average size of offshore-permitted lobster vessels (71') was more than double that of coastal-permitted vessels (33'); however, the average reported value of offshore vessels was more than 10 times greater than coastal vessels. The Massachusetts commercial lobster fleet is predominantly run on diesel fuel, with gasoline representing only 5% of the almost 4 million gallons used.

The total number of traps used to fish for lobster in 2006 was 428,440, with a total reported value of \$39.9 million. While the median number of traps used for offshore permit holders (1400) was more than triple that of coastal permit holders (400), coastal permits accounted for 92% of the total number of traps fished.

Commercial lobster permit holders reported employing 1,338 crew members in 2006. Coastal lobstermen had on average 1 crew member, while offshore lobstermen had on average 3 crew members.

Table 10. Number and value of vessels & traps, fuel usage, and crew numbers employed for commercial lobstering in 2006.

	Coastal	Offshore	Seasonal	Total
Vessels				
total number	1,118	291	54	1,463
median length (ft)	33	71	16	35
median value	\$30,000	\$400,000	\$5,000	\$40,000
total value	\$48,524,608	\$19,417,350	\$249,800	\$68,191,758
Traps				
median number	400	1400	25	400
total number	392,201	35,185	1,054	428,440
median value	\$70	\$120	\$50	\$67
total value	\$35,282,854	\$4,526,660	\$50,832	\$39,860,346
Fuel				
gasoline (gal.)	190,219	4,653	3,237	198,109
diesel (gal.)	1,431,763	2,336,537	120	3,768,420
Crew				
median number	1	3	0	1
total number	564	752	22	1,338

Validity of data. Most of the data presented in this report come from annual commercial lobstermen catch reports (Appendix A), which summarize catch, effort and area information by month. While dealer reports provide much higher resolution landings and value data (transaction-level), they do not collect effort and area information, nor do they include harvest that is not sold (consumed or given away). Despite these shortcomings, dealer data provide a meaningful check against the accuracy of the fishermen reports.

A total of 1,130 commercial lobstermen reporting selling 12.0 million pounds of lobster to 166 seafood dealers in 2006. In comparison, 144 seafood dealers reported purchasing 10.8 million pounds of lobster from 1,078 commercial lobstermen. It not possible to determine whether the 10% discrepancy in total pounds sold is due to fishermen over-reporting or dealer under-reporting, however, it is likely a combination of both. The 13% discrepancy in number of dealers purchasing lobster is likely due to some dealers failing to report their transactions. Dealer non-reporting is also partly the cause of a 5% discrepancy in the number of fishermen permits selling. However, this difference is further influenced by dealers associating transactions to the incorrect permit or to an “unknown” fisherman.

Dealer reporting problems also impact the ability

to make permit-by-permit comparisons of total pounds sold. Regardless, the median difference between what an individual fisherman reported selling and what dealers reported purchasing from that fisherman was only 7%.

This represents only the second year of comprehensive dealer reporting in Massachusetts, compared to 40 years of reporting for commercial lobstermen. We anticipate the issues of dealer non-reporting and mis-reporting to diminish in future years, allowing for a more complete comparison between the two datasets.

Acknowledgements. This report has been prepared by personnel of the Division of Marine Fisheries MIS and Fisheries Statistics Project, funded jointly by the Commonwealth and the National Marine Fisheries Service under the Interjurisdictional Fisheries Act (Public Law 11-407; Project IJ-NA05NMF4071027). The preparation of this report would not have been possible without the cooperation of permitted lobstermen and seafood dealers who provided the information on their reports. The author also wishes to acknowledge Tom Hoopes and Story Reed for coordinating and overseeing the fishery-reporting systems, as well as the efforts of Maryann Fletcher, Rosemary Mitchell, and Lori Lowrey, who helped interpret and key-punch the catch reports.

Table 11. Comparison of fishermen and dealer reported lobster landings for 2006.

Data source	# Fishermen selling	# Dealers buying	Total pounds
Fishermen reports	1,130	166	12,027,228
Dealer reports	1,078	144	10,768,935
Difference	52 (5%)	22 (13%)	1,258,293 (10%)

APPENDIX A - 2006 Commercial Catch Report Forms



2006 OFFSHORE LOBSTER CATCH REPORT

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
DIVISION OF MARINE FISHERIES
251 CAUSEWAY STREET, SUITE 101, BOSTON, MA 02114-2153



CATCH REPORT DUE DATE: JANUARY 31, 2007

PRINT IN INK ONLY

PLEASE REFER TO INSTRUCTIONS ON BACK PAGE WHILE COMPLETING THIS LOBSTER CATCH REPORT

PLEASE PRINT IN INK ONLY

IDENTIFICATION:

DMF ID No: _____

Permit No: _____

Name as it appears
on permit application:

(Last)

(First)

(MI)

Address:

(No.)

(Street)

(City/Town)

(Zip Code)

Telephone Number: _____

Email: _____

CATCH STATUS & PARTNERSHIP INFORMATION:

A. If you **DID NOT CATCH** any lobster during 2006, check the box ☐ **AND sign your name and date the report at bottom of this page and return it to the Division.**

B. If you **DID CATCH** lobster during 2006, complete **BOTH SIDES** of this report as completely and accurately as possible. All lobster taken under this permit must be recorded on this report, even if taken incidentally

**** If you fished in conjunction with another permit holder in 2006, please report your catch and effort information separately ****

GEAR:

A) Circle one or more of the following gear types used to catch lobster: TRAPS/POTS DIVING GEAR TRAWL/DREDGES GILLNET

B) If you fished traps in 2006, estimate the average value of one trap including warp and buoy: \$ _____

C) Indicate the type of traps by completing the percent of total that were fished in 2006:

1. Wood Framed _____% 2. Wire Framed _____% 3. Other _____%

D) If you dove for lobster in 2006, estimate the value of your diving gear and the percent used for catching lobsters:

Estimated Value of Diving Gear: \$ _____ Percent Used for Catching Lobsters: _____ %

PORT(S) OF LANDING:

PLEASE FILL OUT THIS SECTION WHETHER OR NOT YOU USED A BOAT TO LAND YOUR LOBSTER.

	<u>PORT NAME</u>	<u>PERCENT</u>
Indicate the port(s) where you landed your catch. If you landed your catch in more than one port, estimate the percent of lobster landed at each port listed.	1. _____	_____%
	2. _____	_____%
	3. _____	_____%

SIGNATURE: _____

Date: _____

Knowingly falsifying any information contained within this report constitutes the act of perjury and may result in a fine, imprisonment or loss of license (MGL, Chapter 130, Sections 2, 21, 33).

COMPLETE BACK OF THIS FORM IF YOU CAUGHT LOBSTER IN 2006

2006 OFFSHORE LOBSTER CATCH REPORT

2

VESSELS:

THIS SECTION SHOULD BE COMPLETED BY VESSEL OWNER OR PRINCIPAL USER ONLY. BE SURE TO INCLUDE TENDERS USED.

Power (Y/N)	Boat Name	Length (ft)	Home Port	Estimated Dollar Value of Vessel	Percent Used for Lobstering

FUEL:

Total gallons of fuel used for the year to catch lobster: Gasoline: _____ Diesel: _____

TOTAL EMPLOYMENT:

Counting yourself, what was the maximum number of people fishing for lobster on your vessel at any one time in 2006? _____

* For example, if you employed one sternman, you would answer two (2).

DEALERS SOLD TO:

	DEALER NAME	MA DEALER PERMIT #	PERCENT
1.	_____	_____	____ %
2.	_____	_____	____ %
3.	_____	_____	____ %
4.	_____	_____	____ %
5.	_____	_____	____ %

Indicate the dealer(s) you sold your catch to. If you sold your catch to more than one dealer, estimate the percent of lobster sold to each dealer. If you sold lobsters retail, be sure to indicate yourself as a dealer.

HARVEST TABLE:

***** IMPORTANT *****

REFER TO MAP OF STATISTICAL REPORTING AREAS ON NEXT PAGE TO COMPLETE THE AREA(S) FISHED PORTION OF HARVEST TABLE

DO NOT INDICATE LMA'S (Lobster Management Areas) IN AREA(S) FISHED IN TABLE BELOW

FILL IN SHADED AREA ONLY IF YOU USED TRAPS AS YOUR GEAR						REFER TO MAP OF STASTICAL REPORTING AREAS ON NEXT PAGE →→→→→								
	GEAR USED TO HARVEST LOBSTER	MAX TRAPS FISHING	SET OVER DAYS	AVERAGE TRAPS HAULED PER TRIP WHEN FISHING	TOTAL TRIPS WHEN TRAPS HAULED	POUNDS HARVESTED			FIRST AREA FISHED	% OF CATCH	SECOND AREA FISHED	% OF CATCH	THIRD AREA FISHED	% OF CATCH
						LOBSTER SOLD	LOBSTER NOT SOLD*	CRABS						
EX.	TRAPS	400	2	200	28	2240	60	0	5	75	7	25		
JAN														
FEB														
MAR														
APR														
MAY														
JUN														
JUL														
AUG														
SEP														
OCT														
NOV														
DEC														
TOTAL:														

* Lobster Not Sold includes any lobsters consumed or given away to family or friends



2006 COASTAL LOBSTER CATCH REPORT

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
DIVISION OF MARINE FISHERIES
251 CAUSEWAY STREET, SUITE 101, BOSTON, MA 02114-2153



CATCH REPORT DUE DATE: JANUARY 31, 2007
PRINT IN INK ONLY

PLEASE REFER TO INSTRUCTIONS ON BACK PAGE WHILE COMPLETING THIS LOBSTER CATCH REPORT

****IMPORTANT**** THIS REPORT IS SUBJECT TO A RANDOM STATISTICAL AUDIT BY THE DIVISION, YOU SHOULD MAINTAIN ALL RECEIPTS, DEALER SLIPS, PERSONAL RECORDS, ETC. USED TO COMPLETE THIS REPORT FOR AT LEAST ONE YEAR FOLLOWING THE DATE OF SUBMISSION IN CASE YOU ARE CHOSEN.

PLEASE PRINT IN INK ONLY

IDENTIFICATION: DMF ID No: _____ Permit No: _____
Name as it appears on permit application: _____
(Last) (First) (MI)
Address: _____
(No.) (Street) (City/Town) (Zip Code)
Telephone Number: _____ Email: _____

CATCH STATUS & PARTNERSHIP INFORMATION:

- A. If you **DID NOT CATCH** any lobster during 2006, check the box ☐ AND sign your name and date the report at bottom of this page and return it to the Division.
- B. If you **DID CATCH** lobster during 2006, complete **BOTH SIDES** of this report as completely and accurately as possible. All lobster taken under this permit must be recorded on this report, even if taken incidentally

**** If you fished in conjunction with another permit holder in 2006, please report your catch and effort information separately ****

GEAR:

- A) Circle one or more of the following gear types used to catch lobster: TRAPS/POTS DIVING GEAR TRAWL/DREDGES GILLNET
- B) If you fished traps in 2006, estimate the average value of one trap including warp and buoy: \$ _____
- C) Indicate the type of traps by completing the percent of total that were fished in 2006:
1. Wood Framed _____% 2. Wire Framed _____% 3. Other _____%
- D) If you dove for lobster in 2006, estimate the value of your diving gear and the percent used for catching lobsters:
Estimated Value of Diving Gear: \$ _____ Percent Used for Catching Lobsters: _____ %

PORT(S) OF LANDING:

PLEASE FILL OUT THIS SECTION WHETHER OR NOT YOU USED A BOAT TO LAND YOUR LOBSTER.

	PORT NAME	PERCENT
Indicate the port(s) where you landed your catch. If you landed your catch in more than one port, estimate the percent of lobster landed at each port listed.	1. _____	_____%
	2. _____	_____%
	3. _____	_____%

SIGNATURE: _____ Date: _____

Knowingly falsifying any information contained within this report constitutes the act of perjury and may result in a fine, imprisonment or loss of license (MGL, Chapter 130, Sections 2, 21, 33).

COMPLETE BACK OF THIS FORM IF YOU CAUGHT LOBSTER IN 2006

2006 COASTAL LOBSTER CATCH REPORT

2

VESSELS:

THIS SECTION SHOULD BE COMPLETED BY VESSEL OWNER OR PRINCIPAL USER ONLY. BE SURE TO INCLUDE TENDERS USED.

Power (Y/N)	Boat Name	Length (ft)	Home Port	Estimated Dollar Value of Vessel	Percent Used for Lobstering

FUEL:

Total gallons of fuel used for the year to catch lobster: Gasoline: _____ Diesel: _____

TOTAL EMPLOYMENT:

Counting yourself, what was the maximum number of people fishing for lobster on your vessel at any one time in 2006? ____

* For example, if you employed one sternman, you would answer two (2).

DEALERS SOLD TO:

	DEALER NAME	MA DEALER PERMIT #	PERCENT
1.	_____	_____	____ %
2.	_____	_____	____ %
3.	_____	_____	____ %
4.	_____	_____	____ %
5.	_____	_____	____ %

Indicate the dealer(s) you sold your catch to. If you sold your catch to more than one dealer, estimate the percent of lobster sold to each dealer. If you sold lobsters retail, be sure to indicate yourself as a dealer.

HARVEST TABLE:

***** IMPORTANT *****

REFER TO MAP OF STATISTICAL REPORTING AREAS ON NEXT PAGE TO COMPLETE THE AREA(S) FISHED PORTION OF HARVEST TABLE

DO NOT INDICATE LMA'S (Lobster Management Areas) IN AREA(S) FISHED IN TABLE BELOW

FILL IN SHADED AREA ONLY IF YOU USED TRAPS AS YOUR GEAR						REFER TO MAP OF STASTICAL REPORTING AREAS ON NEXT PAGE →→→→→								
	GEAR USED TO HARVEST LOBSTER	MAX TRAPS FISHING	SET OVER DAYS	AVERAGE TRAPS HAULED PER TRIP WHEN FISHING	TOTAL TRIPS WHEN TRAPS HAULED	POUNDS HARVESTED			FIRST AREA FISHED	% OF CATCH	SECOND AREA FISHED	% OF CATCH	THIRD AREA FISHED	% OF CATCH
						LOBSTER SOLD	LOBSTER NOT SOLD*	CRABS						
EX.	TRAPS	400	2	200	28	2240	60	0	5	75	7	25		
JAN														
FEB														
MAR														
APR														
MAY														
JUN														
JUL														
AUG														
SEP														
OCT														
NOV														
DEC														
TOTAL:														

* Lobster Not Sold includes any lobsters consumed or given away to family or friends



2006 SEASONAL LOBSTER CATCH REPORT

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
DIVISION OF MARINE FISHERIES
251 CAUSEWAY STREET, SUITE 101, BOSTON, MA 02114-2153



CATCH REPORT DUE DATE: JANUARY 31, 2007
PRINT IN INK ONLY

PLEASE REFER TO INSTRUCTIONS ON BACK PAGE WHILE COMPLETING THIS LOBSTER CATCH REPORT

PLEASE PRINT IN INK ONLY

IDENTIFICATION: DMF ID No: _____ Permit No: _____
Name as it appears on permit application: _____
(Last) (First) (MI)
Address: _____
(No.) (Street) (City/Town) (Zip Code)
Telephone Number: _____ Email: _____

CATCH STATUS & PARTNERSHIP INFORMATION:

- A. If you **DID NOT CATCH** any lobster during 2006, check the box ☐ AND sign your name and date the report at bottom of this page and return it to the Division.
- B. If you **DID CATCH** lobster during 2006, complete **BOTH SIDES** of this report as completely and accurately as possible. All lobster taken under this permit must be recorded on this report, even if taken incidentally.

**** If you fished in conjunction with another permit holder in 2006, please report your catch and effort information separately ****

GEAR:

- A) Circle one or more of the following gear types used to catch lobster: TRAPS/POTS DIVING GEAR TRAWL/DREDGES GILLNET
- B) If you fished traps in 2006, estimate the average value of one trap including warp and buoy: \$ _____
- C) Indicate the type of traps by completing the percent of total that were fished in 2006:
1. Wood Framed _____% 2. Wire Framed _____% 3. Other _____%
- D) If you dove for lobster in 2006, estimate the value of your diving gear and the percent used for catching lobsters:
Estimated Value of Diving Gear: \$ _____ Percent Used for Catching Lobsters: _____ %

PORT(S) OF LANDING:

PLEASE FILL OUT THIS SECTION WHETHER OR NOT YOU USED A BOAT TO LAND YOUR LOBSTER.

	<u>PORT NAME</u>	<u>PERCENT</u>
Indicate the port(s) where you landed your catch. If you landed your catch in more than one port, estimate the percent of lobster landed at each port listed.	1. _____	_____%
	2. _____	_____%
	3. _____	_____%

SIGNATURE: _____ Date: _____

Knowingly falsifying any information contained within this report constitutes the act of perjury and may result in a fine, imprisonment or loss of license (MGL, Chapter 130, Sections 2, 21, 33).

COMPLETE BACK OF THIS FORM IF YOU CAUGHT LOBSTER IN 2006

2006 SEASONAL LOBSTER CATCH REPORT

2

VESSELS:

THIS SECTION SHOULD BE COMPLETED BY VESSEL OWNER OR PRINCIPAL USER ONLY. BE SURE TO INCLUDE TENDERS USED.

Power (Y/N)	Boat Name	Length (ft)	Home Port	Estimated Dollar Value of Vessel	Percent Used for Lobstering

FUEL:

Total gallons of fuel used for the year to catch lobster: Gasoline: _____ Diesel: _____

TOTAL EMPLOYMENT:

Counting yourself, what was the **maximum** number of people fishing for lobster on your vessel at any one time in 2006? ____

* For example, if you employed one sternman, you would answer two (2).

DEALERS SOLD TO:

Indicate the dealer(s) you sold your catch to. If you sold your catch to more than one dealer, estimate the percent of lobster sold to each dealer. **If you sold lobsters retail, be sure to indicate yourself as a dealer.**

	DEALER NAME	MA DEALER PERMIT #	PERCENT
1.	_____	_____	____ %
2.	_____	_____	____ %
3.	_____	_____	____ %
4.	_____	_____	____ %
5.	_____	_____	____ %

HARVEST TABLE:

***** IMPORTANT *****

REFER TO MAP OF STATISTICAL REPORTING AREAS ON NEXT PAGE TO COMPLETE THE AREA(S) FISHED PORTION OF HARVEST TABLE

DO NOT INDICATE LMA'S (Lobster Management Areas) IN AREA(S) FISHED IN TABLE BELOW

FILL IN SHADED AREA ONLY IF YOU USED TRAPS AS YOUR GEAR						REFER TO MAP OF STASTICAL REPORTING AREAS ON NEXT PAGE →→→→→								
	GEAR USED TO HARVEST LOBSTER	MAX TRAPS FISHING	SET OVER DAYS	AVERAGE TRAPS HAULED PER TRIP WHEN FISHING	TOTAL TRIPS WHEN TRAPS HAULED	POUNDS HARVESTED			FIRST AREA FISHED	% OF CATCH	SECOND AREA FISHED	% OF CATCH	THIRD AREA FISHED	% OF CATCH
						LOBSTER SOLD	LOBSTER NOT SOLD*	CRABS						
EX.	TRAPS	25	2	12	20	90	12	0	5	75	7	25		
JUN														
JUL														
AUG														
SEP														
TOTAL:														

* Lobster Not Sold includes any lobsters consumed or given away to family or friends