



David E. Pierce
Acting Director

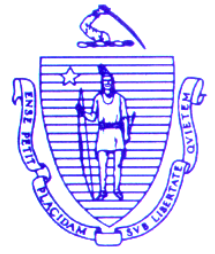
Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Division of Marine Fisheries

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May 27, 2015

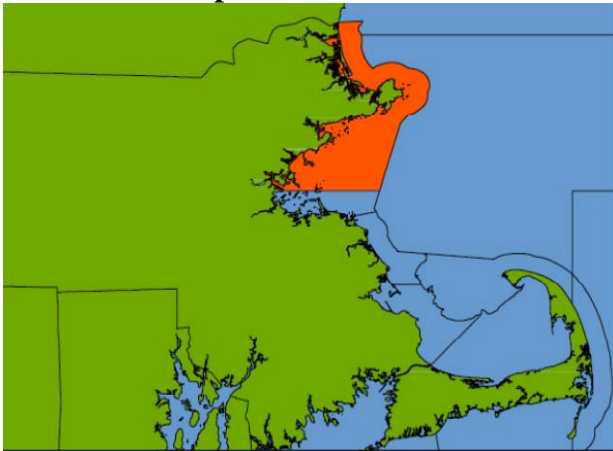
MarineFisheries Advisory

Update on May 28, 2015 Public Hearing DMF's Proposal to Adjust Commercial Gulf of Maine Groundfish Closures

The Division of Marine Fisheries (*MarineFisheries*) is scheduled to hold a [public hearing](#) on Thursday, May 28, 2015. At this public hearing, comments will be accepted on adjusting Massachusetts' existing Gulf of Maine commercial groundfish closures to better protect known cod spawning aggregations and reduce cod fishing mortality. To meet this goal, *MarineFisheries* is proposing to amend both the existing spring/summer and fall/winter closures. These proposed closures are depicted below:

Spring/Summer Closure

April 1 – June 30

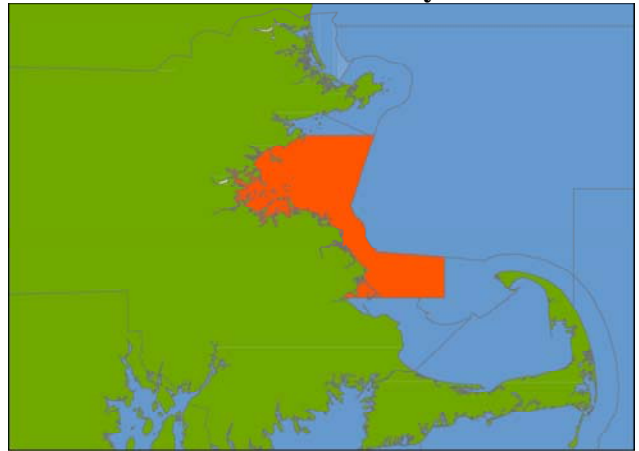


April 1 – June 30 Closure:

All state-waters north of 42°20' to NH/MA border
would be closed to commercial groundfish fishing.

Fall/Winter

October 1 – January 31



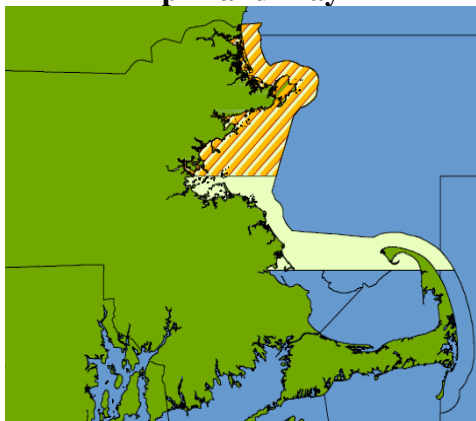
October 1 – January 31 Closure:

All state-waters between 42°00' and 42°30' west of 70°24'
would be closed to commercial groundfish fishing.

The proposed closures would seasonally prevent commercial groundfish fishing in certain state-waters within the Gulf of Maine. During the period of April 1 through June 30 all state-waters north of 42°20' to the MA/NH border would be closed to commercial groundfish fishing. Then during the period of October 1 through January 31 all state-waters between 42°00' and 42°30' west of 70°24' would be closed to commercial groundfish fishing. Certain gears would be exempt from these proposed commercial groundfish closures. These exempt gears include the commercial use of hooks and lines for the purpose of catching dogfish, bluefish, striped bass, mackerel and Atlantic bluefin tuna; pot and trap gear; sea scallop, ocean quahog and surf clam dredges; and cast nets, surface gillnets and purse seines. These exempt gears align with the federally exempt gears that may be active in the state-waters portion of Massachusetts Bay.

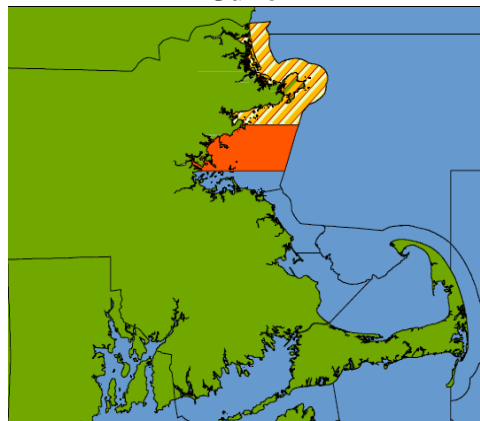
The proposed closures would replace *Marine Fisheries*' longstanding "rolling" closures. The historic rolling closures closed all state-waters between 42°00' and 42°30' during April, May, October and November and all state-waters between 42°30' and the MA/NH border during April, May, and June. The proposed closures differ from the state's historic rolling closures in ways described below:

April and May



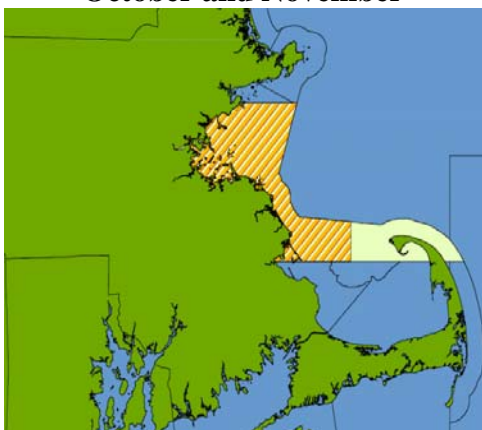
Would maintain existing closure for all state-waters north of 42°20', but would open previously closed area between 42°00' and 42°20'.

June



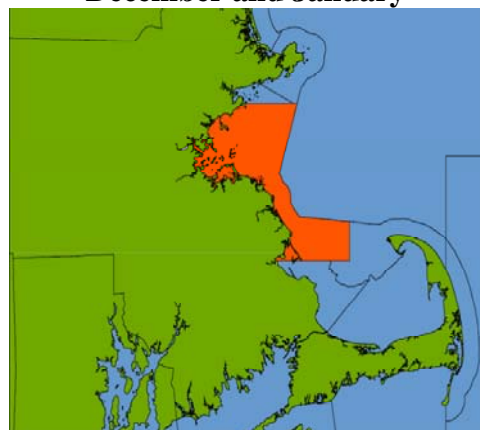
Would maintain existing closure for all state-waters north of 42°30', but would close previously open area between 42°20' and 42°30'.

October and November

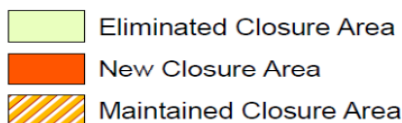


Would maintain existing closure for all state-waters between 42°00' and 42°30' west of 70°24', and open previously closed area east of 70°24'.

December and January



Would enact new closure in all state-waters between 42°00' and 42°30' west of 70°24'.



The proposed closures would match the closures enacted by the New England Fishery Management Council and the National Marine Fisheries Service as part of Framework 53, but with additional protection for spawning cod during April and June. The proposed closures would apply to any commercial fisherman using non-exempt gears, including but not limited to state-water groundfish endorsement permit holders and federal "sector" or "common pool" vessels.

Instructions for Written Comments

For the purpose of taking public comment on these proposed closures the written public comment deadline will be extended through Wednesday, June 17, 2015. Please address all comments to Acting Director David Pierce. Comments can be sent by e-mail to marine.fish@state.ma.us or by mail to 251 Causeway Street, Suite 400, Boston, MA 02114.

Public Hearing Schedule

Thursday, May 28, 2015

Start Time: 6:00 PM

Annisquam River Station DMF Field Office

30 Emerson Avenue

Gloucester, MA 01930

For more information regarding the public hearing, public comment period or regulatory proposals, contact Jared Silva by phone (617-626-1534) or through e-mail (jared.silva@state.ma.us).