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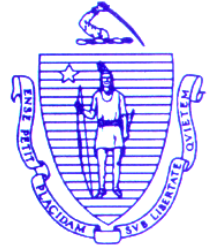
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Marine Fisheries Advisory

Elver Poaching Fines Increased

Rebuilding the depleted population of American eel is a high priority of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. An important conservation measure is the prohibition on the spring-time harvest of young eels (known as “elvers”) when they enter the fresh water environments from the sea. While this restriction has been in place for decades, elevated prices for elvers have resulted in increased poaching in recent years. To enhance compliance with this measure, the fine for taking eels smaller than 6 inches has been increased to \$10,000 or 30 days in jail, or both.

Another longstanding rule makes it unlawful to use or possess any nets with mesh openings less than 1/8” from February 15 to June 15 in the coastal waters of the Commonwealth or upon the banks of rivers and streams within the coastal waters of the Commonwealth. The public is requested to report any suspicious netting activity seen on streams in coastal communities through June 15 to the Environmental Police at 1-800-632-8075. Preventing this poaching activity represents a significant enforcement priority for Massachusetts.

As a reminder, several other eel conservation measures changed last year. The minimum possession size for any eel is 9”, all eel traps deployed by recreational or commercial fishermen must have mesh openings of 1/2” by 1/2”, recreational fishermen are limited to 25 eels per day (50 eels on for-hire vessels), and during the period of September through December, only rod and reel, eel pots/traps, and spears may be used to catch eels.

For more information regarding the management of eels in Massachusetts, please contact *Marine Fisheries* at 617-626-1520 or visit our [website](#) and review our [regulations](#).