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Commonwealth of Massachusetts

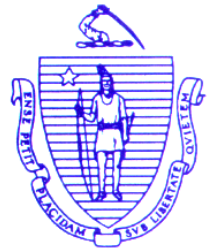
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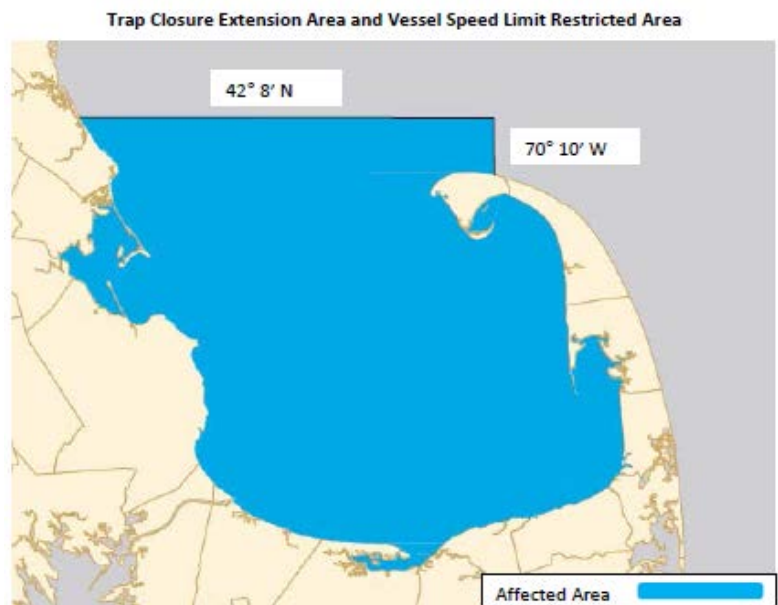
May 4, 2018

Marine Fisheries Advisory

TRAP GEAR CLOSURE IN CAPE COD BAY EXTENDED THROUGH MAY 15TH

The Division of Marine Fisheries has enacted an emergency regulation to extend the Large Whale Trap Gear Closure for a portion of Cape Cod Bay through May 15th. Affected lobstermen may begin to set their gear on Wednesday May 16th. The duration of this closure extension may be shortened or further prolonged based on the results of continuing aerial surveys.

This extended closure only applies within those waters of Cape Cod Bay south of 42° 08' north latitude and those waters north of Cape Cod west of 70° 10' west longitude (map). The closure extension does not apply to those waters north of Cape Cod on Stellwagen Bank or those waters east of 70° 10' within the Outer Cape Cod Lobster Management Area.



This regulation has been implemented to reduce the risk of right whales becoming entangled in trap gear. Right whales are critically endangered species and their population has been decreasing since 2010 due to continued mortality and low birth rates. They seasonally migrate into Massachusetts waters and aggregate in Cape Cod Bay to feed on zooplankton. In recent years more than 50% of the known right whale population is observed in our waters during late winter/early spring. Recent aerial surveys have observed upwards of 100 right whales within Western Cape Cod Bay, about 25% of the known population, and plankton counts remain high indicating that they will likely remain in the Bay into next week.

For more information about the management of protected species in Massachusetts, contact DMF at 617-626-1520 or visit our website at www.mass.gov/marinefisheries.