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Director

Commonwealth of Massachusetts

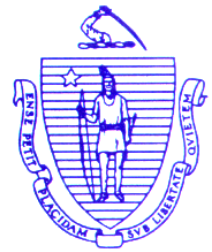
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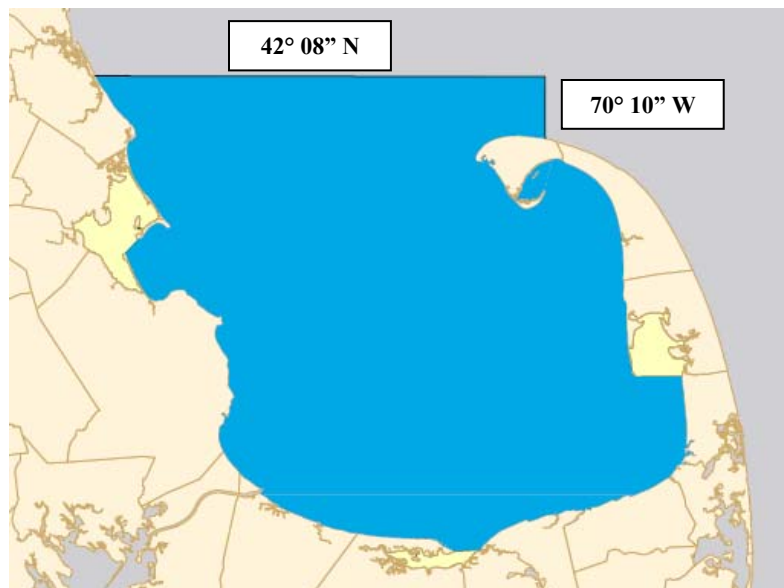
Mary-Lee King
Deputy Commissioner

March 8, 2019

Marine Fisheries Advisory

SEASONAL SMALL VESSEL SPEED LIMIT IN CAPE COD BAY

The Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) has implemented a seasonal small vessel speed limit of 10 knots for certain waters of Cape Cod Bay. This speed limit will be in effect annually during the months of March and April within those waters of Cape Cod Bay south of 42° 08' north latitude, this includes those waters north of Cape Cod that are west of 70° 10' west longitude (see map). The term small vessel refers to all vessels less than 65' overall length. A complementary federal speed limit applies to all vessels 65' overall length and greater. Small vessel traffic within the inshore waters of Plymouth, Duxbury, Kingston, Barnstable and Wellfleet Harbors are exempt from this speed limit. The speed limit also does not apply to emergency and enforcement personnel, including federal whale disentanglement teams.



Restricted Speed Limit Area

Exempted Inshore Waters

This speed limit has been implemented to protect endangered right whales from ship strikes. During the late-winter and early-spring, right whales migrate into and aggregate in Cape Cod Bay where they feed on zooplankton. As we move from the winter into the spring they begin to surface feed. This behavior leaves them particularly susceptible to ship strikes. Ship strikes are a significant source of mortality to these endangered whales. However, the lethality of ship strikes is greatly reduced when vessels are operating at less than 10 knots speed.

For more information regarding the management of protected marine species in Massachusetts, please visit our website (www.mass.gov/marinefisheries) or call DMF at 617-626-1520.